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BAPTISMAL REGENERATION

COMPARED WITH

THE WORD OF GOD

AND THE

STANDARDS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND:

IN REPLY TO

THE REV. CAPEL MOLYNEUX.

BY

PRESBYTER.

~~~~~  
LONDON:

B. FELLOWES, LUDGATE STREET,  
HENRY S. RICHARDSON, GREENWICH; AND  
C. SARGENT, WOOLWICH.

MDCCCXLII.



574.



PRINTED BY RICHARD AND JOHN E. TAYLOR.  
RED LION COURT, FLEET STREET.

## P R E F A C E.

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IT has been the Author's object in the following pages to give a plain exposition of the Church of England doctrine of *Baptismal Regeneration*, and to show its close accordance with the Word of God ; and he has endeavoured to accommodate himself to every class of readers. In the interpretation of the Testament it is necessary to have recourse to the language in which it was written, and consequently in the notes there are such quotations and such observations as are

necessary to justify the argument of the text. They are not, however, necessary for a right understanding of the doctrine, and, except for the reason mentioned, might have been wholly omitted.

*All* men are equally concerned in so important a question as the doctrine of *Regeneration*. So gracious a gift of God should never be slighted by any upon whom it has been bestowed. "To whomsoever much is given, of him shall be much required\*;" and again, "To whom little is forgiven, the same loveth little†." We know not a stronger motive for love than the conviction that God has freely in baptism consigned to us the benefits of our Redeemer's death; and we firmly believe it to be a main reason why the lives of so many Christians belie their

\* Luke xii. 48.

† Luke vii. 47.

holy calling, that either in ignorance they slight, or in obstinacy they contemn, the unspeakable blessing of their baptism.

It is not then to be endured that a minister of the Church of England should stand forward and decry the holy sacrament and appointment of our Redeemer, —rob it of its substantial properties, —represent it as an empty sign, a shadow, and thus trample under foot what through Christ has been the salvation of millions, and is the appointed door of entrance into Christ's holy, catholic, indivisible church.

We earnestly invite the attention of our readers to the following observations of the present learned Bishop of Bangor, and especially we suggest them to the solemn reflection of the Rev. Capel Molyneux, seriously begging him to inquire of

himself, even if he be blind to the doctrine of Gospel Regeneration, whether it would not have been more consistent with "humility" and wise "moderation" to have withheld such sentiments as he has put forth, and which he *must at the time have known* would "engender strife":—

"The Services of our Church, connected with this question, are formed on the principles and expressed in the language of the ancient Christians, and assert in the most unequivocal manner their doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism. That every baptized person, with the exception of unworthy adults, is born again of water and of the Spirit in this sacrament, is an opinion which they affirm in a way level to every capacity. If, therefore, the ministers of our Church should propagate from the pulpit opinions widely different from those which they teach

when they are ministering the sacrament of Baptism, let them consider what confusion they will produce in the minds of their hearers, what distrust in themselves or in the Church whose ministers they are. But what is perhaps still worse, *the desire to reconcile these Services to doctrines entirely at variance with them* will tend TO IMPAIR THE SINCERITY AND SIMPLICITY OF THEIR OWN MINDS, by giving them a taste for that unnatural and artificial mode of interpretation, to which an attachment to preconceived opinions too frequently gives entertainment. We are told that these Services make use of a general phraseology, or of hypothetical language, and expressions of hope and charity. But *plain sense, sober criticism, and historical research*, refute these artificial attempts to affix to them a meaning very different from that which

they bear at first sight, and *foreign from the views and principles* on which they were originally constructed\*.”

\* Bethell on Baptismal Regeneration.

## BAPTISMAL REGENERATION.

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A TRACT has lately appeared in print, under the title, "BAPTISMAL REGENERATION OPPOSED, BOTH BY THE WORD OF GOD AND THE STANDARDS OF THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND." This position is so novel and so startling, especially as being maintained by a minister of that church, that it challenges notice and consideration. We had hoped that a more correct view of the subject would have been set forth, but in this expectation we have been hitherto disappointed; we therefore take it upon ourselves to offer our observations upon the question, and the manner in which it has been treated. Our



remarks, indeed, are drawn up in consequence of the astonishment which has been expressed, that the minds of persons who ought to seek instruction in matters of religion from their spiritual rulers should so long be subjected to the doubts which the tract would tend to produce. A numerous class of persons commonly adopt opinions without consideration, upon the credit of a writer ; and as readily they assume that such opinions must be founded in truth, because they are not contradicted and exposed. It would be well, however, in regard to the subject of Baptismal Regeneration, if persons, before they establish themselves in the persuasion that it is opposed by the word of God and the standards of the Church of England, would examine and test some of the arguments adduced by the author in support of his position.

A reconsideration of the subject would be not altogether unbefitting the author himself, for his statements are made with a degree of confidence which usually accompanies and betrays a want of correct information. The works of some of our divines, as Hooker,

Waterland and Wall, and especially the unanswerable treatise of Bishop Bethell upon the subject, would, it is presumed, present to the author a view, which, as far as appears from the tract, has never entered into his imagination. His confidence would fail him under a growth of doubt as to the validity of his own reasoning and the correctness of his statements.

The following cursory remarks may, it is hoped, without presumption, be offered as a refutation of the bold and extraordinary opinion set forth, that baptismal regeneration is opposed both by the word of God and the standards of the Church of England. Though they pretend to no novelty, they may yet assist ordinary readers in discovering the opinion of the Church of England upon the subject, and may, perhaps, also tend to give them clearer notions of their individual responsibility and the requirements of that new relation in which they are placed, by being the adopted sons of God.

The author opens his subject by stating that he "addresses himself only to such persons as identify regeneration with the new

birth of the Holy Ghost." This is in close accordance with the doctrine of the Church of England; and we close with these terms, more especially as we are told that regeneration is "the change whereby a man becomes in very deed and truth a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." In thus quoting the very words of the catechism, we think there is an unfortunate fallacy; for the plain declaration of the catechism is, that the child is made so in *baptism*, "wherein I was made, &c." The author cannot, therefore, interpret these words in the same sense with the church; for he declares, and it is the whole purport of his tract to prove, that this change does *not* take place in baptism. What, however, the author's real opinions are we cannot discover, and it seems probable that they are not very clear to himself; for in the same page\* of his tract, it is stated, that "baptism may possibly be an *occasion* when regeneration may be vouchsafed," and yet "regeneration is the *pre-requisite* for baptism;" as also in another part we are told, that the

\* Page 41.

Church of England teaches that "regeneration\* must precede baptism." It is stated to be "the object of the tract not to argue for right views of regeneration, but to contend against wrong views of baptism:" but it appears to us impossible to separate these points; the one necessarily involves the other, for the question at issue is,—is regeneration connected with baptism? and we see not how it is possible to determine this point, unless a right scriptural view of regeneration be established. We must therefore beg to assume, that a "right view of regeneration" should have been set forth, by which it would have been better seen whether regeneration, in the sense of Scripture, be connected with the sacrament of baptism or not.

The questions which the tract embraces, and which we propose to examine, are two; but we invert the order in which they stand. We shall inquire first, whether baptismal regeneration be or be not opposed by the standards of the Church of England; and when we shall have shown that, according to the

\* Page 59.



doctrine of the Church of England, regeneration is inseparably connected with baptism, we shall endeavour to prove that this doctrine is confirmed by the word of God.

It is rightly stated that the doctrine of the Church of England is set forth in Article xxv.: "Sacraments ordained of Christ be not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but *rather* they be certain *sure witnesses* and *effectual signs* of grace and God's good-will towards us; by the which *he doth work invisibly* in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him."

The framers of our Articles appear to have employed as strong language as they could—" *sure witnesses* "—" *effectual signs* ." What meaning can possibly be attached to the words, excepting that which they commonly bear? We are taught that the sacraments (two) are witnesses upon which *we can for a certainty rely* ; that they are not *bare, naked* signs, but *effectual* (efficacia), i. e. *efficacious, operating* in us. And of what are they sure witnesses and effectual signs? Of *grace* and *God's good-will towards us* . The sacraments,

therefore,—or, to confine our observations to baptism, as more immediately affecting the question at issue,—baptism is declared by the Article to be a witness, upon which we may for a certainty rely, of *grace*, of which also it is an *effectual* sign; not merely a sign, but an efficacious sign. And to guard against the possibility of mistake upon the point, the Article proceeds to state, that *by means of this sacrament* (“by the which”\*) God *doth work* invisibly in us. In baptism, therefore, according to the Church of England, there is something beyond being made a member of the visible church of Christ; that RATHER, there is, by means of the sacrament, some *invisible working in us on God’s part*. This, the *more important* ingredient, appears to have wholly escaped the author’s observation, for he tells us, though, as we shall show in a succeeding part, *most erroneously*, that faith

\* Mr. Molyneux needs not to be reminded that the Latin is *per quæ*, or to be told that the preposition *per* implies the *intermediate agency employed* for effecting anything; so that, according to the Church of England, the sacraments are *the appointed means* of grace,—that kind of grace in particular which is suited to the nature of each sacrament.

is confirmed and grace increased, "*not by the act of baptism,*" but "by virtue of prayer made unto God."

We will therefore endeavour to gather from the Article itself the opinion of the church in regard to this "invisible working of God in us;" God "doth not only *quicken*, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in him." The author of the tract appears not to have a clear conception of the meaning of the Article, and according to the practice of the Puritans of old, to confound the two sacraments, as though they were not designed for *different* purposes. "A variety of benefits and privileges," says he, "are said to be conveyed by means of the sacraments; of both sacraments, one as much as the other\*."

That certain the same benefits accrue to both is unquestionable; but it is especially in regard to baptism that it is stated that God "doth quicken our faith," *i. e.* arouse it out of a dormant state: it is presumed that the author does not mean to express that this portion of the Article applies to the Lord's Supper. Let us, however, turn to Article

\* Page 45.

XXVII. : "Baptism is not only a sign of profession and mark of difference, whereby Christian men are discerned from others that be not christened, but it is also a sign of regeneration, or new birth, whereby, as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church; the promises of the forgiveness of sins, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed; and grace increased, by virtue of prayer unto God." It is thus that the church propounds her opinion in regard to the particular benefit attached to the sacrament of baptism. This benefit is set forth by the expression "sign of regeneration, or new birth." The Article is not to be taken by itself, but it necessarily carries us back to Article xxv., where the church tells us, that sacraments generally are "sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace, whereby God doth work invisibly in us." In Article xxvii. the particular kind of grace, of which baptism is the *sure* witness and *effectual* sign, is more specifically described, "regeneration, or new birth." Is it possible, we may be allowed



to ask, for the church to teach more clearly that regeneration takes place at baptism? For the present we say not what the church's interpretation of regeneration is: the author of the tract before us declares his to be "that change whereby a man becomes in very deed and truth a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." Let the matter be put plainly, that it may be thereby ascertained how far a minister of the Church of England is justified in propounding that "baptismal regeneration is opposed by the standards of the Church of England." Baptism is the sure witness and effectual sign of grace,—that particular grace designated *regeneration*, and therefore, according to the author himself, baptism is the *sure* witness and *effectual* sign of the change whereby a man is made in very deed and truth "a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven."

The Article is, however, even yet more precise, for it proceeds, "whereby," *i. e.* by which sign of regeneration (*per quod*) or its synonymous expression, "by which baptism, as by an instrument, they that receive bap-

tism rightly are grafted into the Church ;— the promises of forgiveness of sins, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed ; faith is confirmed, and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God.” It appears, therefore, from this, that a right reception of baptism is considered by the church to be the instrument or appointed means by which a man is grafted into the church : the promise of the forgiveness of sins, and of his adoption to be a son of God by the Holy Ghost, is visibly signed and sealed. We are hereby informed what “the invisible working of God in us” is, and which is visibly signed and sealed. Such is the substance of Articles xxv. and xxvii., yet the tract informs us that “the simple history and exposition of the doctrine is this, namely, that baptism is the sign of regeneration to the regenerate.” This may be simple, but yet it is not sufficiently clear for our comprehension. The Article says, that it is by means of the sacrament of baptism that God doth work invisibly in us. No, says the author of the tract, “the inward work is then only outwardly testified of.”

The Article says, that the invisible working of God consists in the remission of sins and the adoption to be the sons of God. No, says our author, "the party has been *before* baptism inwardly born of the Spirit, and that by baptism the party is outwardly signed and sealed as belonging to the family of God."

Will the learned author allow us to call his attention to Article ix.? it states, that "this infection of nature (original sin) doth remain in them that are *regenerated*;" and again in the latter part it observes, "that there is no condemnation for them that believe and are *baptized*." Now in the Latin copy, which, be it remembered, is of equal authority with the English, one and the same word is used, which in the English is in the former case rendered *regenerated*, and in the latter *baptized*. Again we ask, what can possibly explain in clearer terms that the Church of England identifies regeneration with baptism? "Her authoritative teaching is to be learnt from her Articles," and they employ the terms *regenerated* and *baptized* as meaning the same.

We have thus endeavoured to show that

baptismal regeneration is the doctrine of the Church of England, as set forth in her ARTICLES; and we have not to make that apology for the formularies and services of the church which we find in the tract before us: "Her formularies and services are necessarily supposed, and ought to be in accordance with them, and their sense and meaning must be interpreted and determined by them. Should *any seeming contrariety appear betwixt the Articles and services*, the latter must bend and give way, not the former. The Articles are the foundation;—touch that, and the building as a whole falls to the ground." The formularies and services, if we mistake not, will be found to speak precisely the same language as the Articles; there is no need for straining one part to make it square with the other. In the service of baptism, the minister and congregation, before the ministration of the rite, pray that it would please God to regenerate the child by his Holy Spirit; after baptism, they thank God that it hath pleased him to regenerate the child. Here is no charitable supposition required, but the plain statement of a fact.



So also in the catechism, the first answer put into the mouth of every child is, "My godfathers and my godmothers, *wherein* I was made a member of Christ, the child of God, and an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven." Again, in the service of Confirmation, the prayer which the bishop offers up in the name of the assembled congregation speaks of all the candidates as regenerate: "Almighty and everliving God, who hast vouchsafed to regenerate these thy servants *by water and the Holy Ghost, and hast given unto them forgiveness of all their sins*, strengthen them, &c." In like manner, in the service for Christmas-day, the collect directs *all* her members to speak the same language; to appeal to God, as "being regenerate and made his children by adoption and grace." One would imagine, that the case is so plain as to defy all controversy; yet the author of the tract seeks to evade the common sense and meaning of these "standards of the Church of England." "To whom," he asks\*, "or in whose case, does the Article declare bap-

\* Page 48.

tism to be a sign of regeneration? To such as receive it *rightly*: and who are they that receive it *rightly*? Such as receive it *worthily*, or with faith. And, once more, who are they that receive it with faith? The regenerate, and none else; for none else have faith; it springs exclusively from regenerating grace." But does the author forget that the same Article declares that children are *rightly* baptized, and if *rightly*, then they are regenerated. "The baptism of young children is in anywise to be retained in the church, as most agreeable with the institution of Christ;" and if *most agreeable* with the institution of Christ, we presume it will be admitted that children are *rightly* baptized.

The catechism, as we have seen, teaches, in strict accordance with this, that every baptized child was regenerated in his baptism; yet we find the bold, we had almost written daring, assertion, that "the catechism\* with the services and the articles severally and collectively maintain that the fruits of regeneration, and hence *regeneration itself*, must

\* Page 59.

*precede baptism.*" How is this to be reconciled with the tenor of preceding observations? for it is remarked, that persons holding the doctrine of baptismal regeneration "assume\*, that, having been baptized, regeneration has followed. They live and die in this persuasion. All other means of regeneration are, as far as that particular end is concerned, neglected, and considered, in reference to themselves, quite inappropriate; *all exhortations to become so*, to them are quite inapplicable." We are told at one part, that the Church of England teaches that regeneration *must precede baptism*, and at another it is implied that *baptized* persons are to be *exhorted to become regenerate*. If language is to be taken in its ordinary sense, there is a manifest contradiction. Regeneration *must precede baptism*, but baptized persons are to be *exhorted to adopt means to become regenerate*.

The language of the church in her services is so clear, so definite upon the point, connecting baptism and regeneration, that the

\* Page 3.

holders of an opposite opinion are obliged to assume that her language is framed upon "a charitable supposition that the thing prayed for is granted, and that she speaks accordingly." The same observation is made by other writers, as also that the services are framed for bodies of men generally, and not as applicable specifically to individuals. It is indeed unquestionable, that the *general* services of the church are so constructed, but not her *particular* services. In these latter she presumes not to dive into the hearts of those who are the subjects of the service, but assumes, in all cases where it is possible for the mouth to answer, that it speaks the genuine sincere feelings of the heart.

For instance, in the churching of women, to the prayer offered by the minister, "save this woman thy servant," the reply is made by the congregation, "who putteth her trust in Thee." The very fact that the party presents herself in the house of God to return thanks for her safe delivery, is assumed by the church to be an evidence of her trust in God. In other cases where persons are incapable of giving such evidence,



the church adapts her language to the particular circumstances. Thus, in the burial of the dead, when the body is committed to the ground, the "hope of resurrection to eternal life" is said to be "sure and certain," because the *resurrection* spoken of applies generally, and the *certainty* of our hope rests upon the promise of God. But in the collect concluding the service, the minister prays in behalf of the congregation, that, "when they shall depart this life, they may rest in Christ, as *their hope is* this their brother doth." Here the church could not pronounce more than a charitable hope.

The service of baptism is in like manner special, and the language of the church corresponds. She appeals to the *promise* of God, and by consequence she speaks with *positive certainty*; and as she believes that God's promise is to be performed *at the time*, and not deferred to some future occasion, there is no *hope* expressed, but after baptism *a giving of thanks* for God's goodness. *Hope* applied to a benefit to be received at the time of the service, would imply a distrust of God's promise being performed. Thus analogy im-

pels us to understand the language of the Liturgy in its plain ordinary sense. In the burial of a Christian, as we have seen, the church cannot determine whether the soul is resting in Christ or not, and she pronounces nothing more than her *hope*, *i. e.* her pious wish. In the case of baptism, however, she relies on the promise of God, and pronounces accordingly that the child *is* regenerated: "Seeing now, dearly beloved brethren, that this child is regenerate and grafted into the body of Christ's church, let us give thanks unto Almighty God for these benefits, and with one accord make our prayers unto Him, that this child *may lead the rest of his life according to this beginning.*" Did the church believe that any further *change* of life was necessary, when so fitting an occasion for supplicating this mercy of God, as the time of baptism? yet, on the contrary, her prayer is, that the future life may be in accordance with this beginning.

The same principle pervades the whole Liturgy, and forces upon us the same conclusion, that baptism is the appointed means for regeneration. A form of words is adopted

throughout, bespeaking the feelings of a sincere Christian. This applies to all cases where the heart of man is concerned. With regard, however, to blessings which flow from God, and which are continually necessary during the Christian's pilgrimage, these are all made the subject of prayer, whether they be temporal or spiritual blessings; for instance, we pray for "the true circumcision of the heart;" we pray "that we may daily be renewed by the Holy Spirit;" "that we may perfectly love God;" "that we may have grace to follow the blessed saints in all virtuous and godly living." All these blessings are made the subject of prayer; but where throughout the service do we find a single prayer for the *regeneration*\* of any person? On the contrary, the church founds her prayer for the renewal of the heart upon the very fact, that all her members are regenerate and made God's children by adoption

\* How does Mr. Molyneux account for this? and how does he reconcile his notions of final perseverance with the prayer of the bishop in confirmation, implying, as it does, that the sons of God may fall: "Defend, O Lord, this *thy child* with thy heavenly grace, that he may *continue* thine for ever."

and grace: "Grant\* that we, *being* regenerate, and made thy children by adoption and grace, may daily be renewed by thy Holy Spirit." Upon such grounds we fully agree with the sentiments of a living divine of unquestioned zeal and universally admitted eloquence: "That the Church of England does hold, and does teach baptismal regeneration, would never, we must venture to think, have been disputed, had not men been anxious to remain in her communion, and yet to make her formularies square with their own private notions. We really think that no fair, no straightforward dealing can get rid of the conclusion, that the church holds what is called baptismal regeneration. You may dislike the doctrine, you may wish it expunged from the Prayer-book; but so long as I subscribe to that Prayer-book, and so long as I officiate according to the forms of that Prayer-book, I do not see how I can be commonly honest and yet deny that every baptized person is on that account regenerate†."

The tract, however, does most strangely

\* Collect for Christmas Day.

† Melvill's Sermons, vol. ii. Sermon 8.



deny it, and attempts to justify the denial upon another fallacious argument: "Nor is the remaining statement, 'a means whereby we receive the same,' at all at variance with this interpretation, as (if we will let the church speak for herself) will appear in a moment; for, in the first place, observe, the statement is *a* means, not *the* means. This is very remarkable! Why did not the framers of the catechism declare it to be the means?—because evidently they did not so regard it, nor intend that their disciples should. A means is all that they avouch concerning it; and *a* means it may be, doubtless sometimes is—who disputes it? But this is widely different from *the* means." This argument was first brought forward by a learned and excellent divine, from whose work, we presume, it was transferred into the tract before us\*. It surprises us that a divine of such deep learning and discernment should have brought into the field so fragile a weapon; and we

\* Why not *THE mean* and *THE pledge*? Truly, had *this* form, the *definite* form to wit, been used, the conferring of regeneration would have been restricted to the *SOLE* instrumental mean of outward baptism. But *another* form, the

must presume to think that neither Mr. Faber nor the author of the tract would have employed it, had they read more carefully the work of the judicious Hooker.

By the word "Sacrament," our church teaches us we are to understand, "an outward and visible sign of *an* inward and spiritual grace, given unto us, ordained by Christ himself, as *a* means whereby we receive the same and *a* pledge to assure us thereof." We presume it will be admitted by those who fancy that they discover an argument in their favour in "*A* means," "*A* pledge," that "*AN* inward and spiritual grace," through the indefinite article, refers to *some other inward and spiritual grace than the particular grace conveyed through means of the sacrament*. As therefore the Church of England in this very answer alludes to grace *not* conveyed *through the sacrament*, it would have been

*indefinite* form to wit, is used: *A mean* and *A pledge*. Hence, quite agreeable to Scripture, and quite in accordance with the testimony of Augustine to the judgment of the Primitive Church, the Church of England virtually determines, that *Baptism is not the SOLE instrumental mean of regeneration*.—Faber's *Primitive Doctrine of Regeneration*, page 349.

no other than an absurdity to have declared that a sacrament is *the* means of grace.

This may be shown in another way. What is *Grace*? It is the favour of God shown to us by the *various* gifts of the Holy Ghost: consequently, as these gifts are various, *grace* will of necessity be of *different kinds*. Every virtue is a grace, for it is engendered in a man by his own exertions co-operating with the aid of the Holy Spirit vouchsafed to sincere prayer. The *means* of grace, therefore, are *various*; for instance, *prayer, meditation, reading*, are all *means of grace*; but not in all respects of the same grace as is conveyed through *pecially appointed means*, the sacraments. And even in regard to *these* means, though in many respects there may be the same kind of grace conveyed, yet the church teaches us that there is also a particular and different kind of grace conveyed by each sacrament respectively.

It is, therefore, not at all remarkable, that by *sacrament* we are to understand *a* means of grace; for it would be alike opposed by the Church of England and the word of God to say that there are no other means of grace

besides the sacraments. A sacrament generically is *a* means of grace; each particular sacrament is *a* means of grace, but *the* means of that particular kind of grace which is thereby conveyed. In other words, baptism is by the church declared to be *a* or *one of the* means of grace, but *the* or *the sole* appointed means of that particular grace designated regeneration. As the works of Hooker, who has acquired for himself the distinguished appellation of "the judicious," will not be at the command of all into whose hands this little treatise may fall, and as Hooker is a fair specimen of the opinions of our Reformers, no apology will be necessary for the following very lengthened quotation :

"Sacraments\*, by reason of their mixed nature, are more diversely interpreted and disputed of than any other part of religion besides; for that in so great a store of properties belonging to the self-same thing, as every man's wit hath taken hold of some especial consideration above the rest, so they have accordingly seemed one to cross another as touching their several opinions about the necessity of sacraments, whereas in truth their disagreement

\* Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, Book V. Chapter 57.



is not so great. For let respect be had to *the duty which every communicant doth undertake*, and we may well determine concerning the use of sacraments, that they serve as bonds of obedience to God, strict obligations to the mutual exercise of Christian charity, provocations to godliness, preservations from sin, memorials of the principal benefits of Christ; respect *the time of their institution*, and it thereby appeareth that God hath annexed them for ever unto the New Testament, as other rites were before with the Old; regard *the weakness which is in us*, and they are warrants for the more security of our belief; *compare the receivers of them with such as receive them not*, and sacraments are marks of distinction to separate God's own from strangers: so that in all these respects, they are found to be most necessary.

“But their *chiefest force and virtue* consisteth not herein so much, as in that they are heavenly ceremonies, which God hath sanctified and ordained to be administered in his church; first, as marks whereby to know when God doth impart the vital or saving grace of Christ unto all that are capable thereof\*; and, secondly, as means conditional

\* We cannot forbear transcribing a note which is inserted in Hooker's Works, as edited by the Rev. John Keble, M.A. The note is Hooker's upon an objection started to this portion of his work. It is in his playful style, and may not be

which God requireth in them unto whom he imparteth grace. For sith [since] God in himself is invisible, therefore, when it seemeth good in the eyes of his heavenly wisdom, that men for some special intent and purpose should take notice of his glorious presence, he giveth them some plain and sensible token whereby to know what they cannot see. For Moses to see God and live was impossible, yet Moses by fire knew where the glory of God extraordinarily was present. The angel by whom God endued the waters of the pool called Bethesda with supernatural virtue to heal, was not seen of any, yet the time of the angel's presence was known by the troubled motions of the waters themselves. The apostles by fiery tongues, which they saw, were admonished when

altogether inapplicable to the occasion of these remarks:—  
“The sacraments being a matter so much debated, it seemeth strange that you, which taketh upon you so great care of the church, should never take the paines at the least for the good of your own soul, to know that which every shopman and prentise is now acquainted with in this matter. You speake of sacraments as if by the space of these thirty or fourty yeares you have lived in some cave of the earth, and never heard in what points the church doth either varie, or agree concerning them. It were strange that you should affect to seeme ignorant in that whereof you have presumed to be a judg. And yeat that you should be so raw as your wordes make show of I cannot persuade myself.”

the Spirit, which they could not behold, was upon them. In like manner it is with us. Christ and his Holy Spirit with all their blessed effects, though entering into the soul of man, we are not able to apprehend or express how, do, notwithstanding, give notice of the times when they use to make their access, because it pleaseth Almighty God to communicate by sensible means those blessings which are incomprehensible.

“ Seeing, therefore, that grace is a consequent of sacraments, a thing which accompanyeth them as their end, a benefit which he that hath, receiveth from God himself, the author of sacraments, and not from any other natural or supernatural quality in them, it may be hereby both understood that sacraments are necessary, and that the manner of their necessity to life supernatural is not in all respects as food unto natural life, because they contain *in themselves* no vital force or efficacy; they are not physical, but moral instruments of salvation, duties of service and worship, which unless we perform as the Author of grace requireth, they are unprofitable. For all receive not the grace of God which receive the sacraments of his grace\*. Neither is it *ordinarily* his will to

\* It is no uncommon thing for the opponents of baptismal regeneration to enlist Hooker on their side upon the strength of this passage; with what fairness and candour our

bestow the grace of sacraments on any, but by the sacraments ; which grace also, they that receive by sacraments or with sacraments receive it from Him, and not from them. For of sacraments the very same is true which Solomon's wisdom observeth in the brazen serpent :—‘ He that turned towards it was not healed by the thing he saw, but by Thee, O Saviour of all !’

“ This is therefore the necessity of sacraments. That saving grace which Christ originally is, or hath, for the general good of his whole church, by sacraments he severally deriveth into every member thereof. Sacraments serve as the instruments of God to that end and purpose,—moral instruments, the use whereof is in our hands, the effect in his ; for the use we have his express commandment, for the effect his conditional promise : so that without our obedience to the one, there is of the other no apparent assurance ; as contrariwise, where the signs and sacraments of his grace are not either through contempt unreceived, or received with contempt, we are not to

readers will be enabled to judge. His argument is, that there is an inward grace besides the outward sign, and that therefore a sacrament is to be received as the Author of grace requireth. In regard to baptism in particular, he says that *regeneration* is its peculiar grace, and that where this sacrament is not received *with contempt*, and children *cannot receive it with contempt*, it really gives what it signifies.



doubt but that they really give what they promise, and are what they signify. For we take not baptism nor the eucharist for bare *resemblances* or memorials of things absent, neither for *naked signs* and testimonies assuring us of grace received before, but (as they are indeed and in verity) for means effectual, whereby God, when we take the sacraments, delivereth into our hands that grace available to eternal life, which grace the sacraments represent or signify.

“There have grown in the doctrine concerning sacraments many difficulties for want of distinct explication what kind or degree of grace doth belong unto each sacrament. For by this it hath come to pass, that the true immediate cause why Baptism and why the Supper of our Lord is necessary, few do rightly and distinctly consider. *It cannot be denied but sundry the same effects and benefits which grow unto men by the one sacrament may rightly be attributed unto the other. Yet doth baptism challenge to itself the inchoation of those graces, the consummation whereof dependeth on mysteries ensuing. We receive Christ Jesus in baptism once as the first beginner; in the eucharist often, as being by continual degrees the finisher of our life. By baptism, therefore, we receive Christ Jesus, and from him that saving grace which is proper to baptism. By the other sacrament also we receive him also, impart-*

ing therein himself and that grace which the eucharist properly bestoweth. *So that each sacrament having both that which is general or common, and that also which is peculiar unto itself, we may hereby gather that the participation of Christ, which properly belongeth to any one sacrament, is not otherwise to be obtained but by the sacrament whereunto it is proper."*

We have thus endeavoured to prove that baptismal regeneration is a doctrine of the Church of England, and we are almost inclined to apologize for it, as from its clearness it would not need to be proved, but for the bold flippancy with which private fancies are set up against the evidence of common sense and the solid arguments of our profoundest divines.

It remains now, that we examine whether baptismal regeneration be the doctrine of the word of God.

In order to this, we must first ascertain what the church understands by the term "regeneration." It is on this account that we stated that it is impossible to separate the consideration of "wrong views of baptism" from "right views of regeneration." We

have seen that the church connects regeneration with baptism; her opinion, therefore, as to the spiritual benefits attached to baptism will explain her idea of *regeneration*. Let us then first examine the ARTICLES, and for the confirmation of the church's opinion as expressed by them, compare it with the SERVICE OF BAPTISM and the CATECHISM.

In Article XVI., entitled "SIN AFTER BAPTISM," we read, "Not every deadly sin, willingly committed *after baptism*, is sin against the Holy Ghost, and unpardonable, wherefore the grant of repentance is not to be denied to such as fall into sin *after baptism*. *After we have received the Holy Ghost*, we may depart from grace given, and fall into sin." From this we justly infer, that *the reception of the Holy Ghost* takes place at baptism. The Article employs "after baptism" and "after we have received the Holy Ghost" as synonymous expressions.

In Article XXV. sacraments are defined to be "not only badges or tokens of Christian men's profession, but *rather*\* they be cer-

\* As Hooker expresses it — "Herein consisteth their *chiefest* force and virtue."

tain sure witnesses and effectual signs of grace and God's goodwill towards us, by the which [sacraments] he doth work invisibly in us, and doth not only quicken, but also strengthen and confirm our faith in Him." Thus far we gather that the Holy Ghost is given in baptism, and that herein consists God's *invisible* working in us, (for who can *see* the Holy Spirit?)—that faith is quickened and confirmed. In Article XXVII. we have a more definite interpretation: "Baptism is a sign" (and therefore as we have seen in Article XXV.)—"an *effectual* sign of regeneration or new birth, whereby (*i. e.* by which *baptism*), as by an instrument, they that receive baptism rightly are grafted into the church; the promises of the forgiveness of sins, and of our adoption to be the sons of God by the Holy Ghost, are visibly signed and sealed; faith is confirmed; and grace increased by virtue of prayer unto God." We have already shown that the Article declares *infants* to be *rightly* baptized, for it states that "the baptism of young children is most agreeable\* with the institution of Christ."

\* Optime congruat.



We now, therefore, perceive that the further especial benefit of baptism is, that the baptized party *is grafted\* into the church*; in other words, made a member of *that* body of which Christ is the head, that *the promises of forgiveness of sins and adoption to be the son of God are visibly signed and sealed*. Perhaps we shall be excused for stating, for the advantage of general readers, that in the Latin, the language in which the Articles were originally drawn up, a word† is used, which signifies that the bargain or contract for the forgiveness of sins and adoption to be the sons of God is then and thereby concluded; that a mark is then set, to which on all future occasions an appeal may be made. Through life, therefore, nay, after death to the day of eternal judgment, we may appeal to our baptism that our sins were then forgiven, and that we then became by adoption the sons of God.

We are told, indeed, that “the subject of baptism, it is assumed, has faith, has grace, and then, at baptism, these are respectively

\* “I am the vine, ye are the branches.”—John xv. 5.

† Obsignantur.

confirmed and increased; and *that*, moreover, not by the washing of water, or act of baptism (which is carefully defined to be the *sign* of regeneration), but ‘by virtue of prayer made unto God.’” It is not with a view of arguing the question, whether faith and grace are in all cases, or in any, imparted before baptism\*, that we introduce these words, as they are separate questions, and beside our present purpose; but we would wish to correct an error into which the author of the tract has fallen. He must excuse us for saying that he appears not to understand the Article, and perhaps he will allow us to explain it. The Article, then, states, that “*it is by the act of baptism*, as by an instrument, that faith is confirmed,” and that too without speaking at all of prayer made unto God. It adds, that “*by virtue of prayer unto God grace is increased.*” The English Article is sufficient to show this; but if any doubt could exist, it would be removed by a reference to the Latin. It is there evident beyond contro-

\* We think it quite consistent with Scripture to believe that grace to a certain degree, and faith in a certain sense, are vouchsafed before the baptism of adults.

versy, from the position of words, that the expression "by virtue of prayer unto God" is applied *solely* to the clause "grace is increased\*." And that grace should on all occasions be increased upon the sincere prayers of the faithful, is only consonant with our Saviour's promise.

Thus, upon the whole, we gather from the Articles that, by the act of baptism, the Holy Ghost is received; God works invisibly in us; his working consists in the remission of our sins and our adoption to be the sons of God; faith is quickened and confirmed; and, lastly, by virtue of prayer unto God, grace is increased.

We have now to inquire how the service of baptism corresponds with this. The language is so clear, that we have only to select out of the service those portions which apply to the point. At the commencement, the

\* *Per quod* (signum regenerationis, id est, baptismum) tanquam per instrumentum recte baptismum suscipientes, Ecclesiæ inseruntur, promissiones de remissione peccatorum, atque adoptione nostra in filios Dei per Spiritum Sanctum visibilibus obsignantur, fides confirmatur, *et vi divinæ invocationis* gratia augetur.

minister calls upon the congregation to "pray, that the child may be baptized with water and the Holy Ghost, and received into Christ's holy church, and be made a lively member of the same." What is this but, as the Article expresses it, "that the party may receive the Holy Ghost; may be engrafted into the church of Christ; may have faith quickened and confirmed"? The minister then accordingly prays, "that the child may be washed and sanctified with the Holy Ghost; that he, being delivered from God's wrath, may be received into the ark of Christ's church, and being steadfast in faith, and joyful through hope, may so pass the waves of this troublesome world, that finally he may come to the land of everlasting life:" and again, more particularly and definitely, "that the child may receive remission of his sins by spiritual regeneration, that he may enjoy the everlasting benediction of God's heavenly washing, and may come to the eternal kingdom which God has promised by Christ our Lord." What again is this but, according to the language of the Article, "that the contract for the forgiveness



of sins and adoption to be a son of God may be concluded, that he may enjoy the everlasting benediction\* of *appealing* to this heavenly washing"? And even still more definitely, after an exhortation to the sponsors, a prayer is offered,—“Give thy Holy Spirit to this infant, that he may be born again, and be made an heir of everlasting salvation;” and also in the prayer immediately preceding the baptism, “Sanctify this water to the mystical washing away of sins,” in the words of the Article, again, that the child may receive the Holy Ghost, that God may invisibly work in the child, that the promise of forgiveness of sins and adoption to be a son of God may be signed and sealed.

So soon as the baptism has taken place, thanks are immediately given to God, that it hath pleased him to confer all these blessings. We subjoin the entire prayer, as explanatory of the doctrine of the church, namely, that notwithstanding all the spiritual

\* Whether he “will *enjoy* the everlasting benediction of his heavenly washing,” and whether he “will finally come to the land of everlasting life, there to reign,” is a separate question, and will depend upon his future life.

blessings conferred upon the child, its *final salvation* will depend upon its future life.

If the child should live, "the old man has to be crucified, the whole body of sin has to be abolished." "We yield Thee hearty thanks, most merciful Father, that it hath pleased Thee to regenerate this infant with thy Holy Spirit, to receive him for thine own child by adoption, and to incorporate him into the holy church. And humbly we beseech Thee to grant that he, being dead to sin and living unto righteousness, and being buried with Christ in his death, may crucify the old man and utterly abolish the whole body of sin; and that as he is made partaker of the death of thy Son, he may also be partaker of his resurrection; so that finally, with the residue of thy holy church, he may be an inheritor of thine everlasting kingdom, through Christ our Lord."

Thus far we conclude that a close harmony subsists between the Articles and the service of baptism in regard to the interpretation to be put upon the term "Regeneration."

The Catechism teaches precisely the same doctrine: the baptized disciple is instructed

to say, that "in his baptism he was made a member of Christ," or engrafted into the church,—the body, of which Christ is the head ; secondly, the child of God, or adopted to be the son of God ; thirdly, an inheritor of the kingdom of heaven ; or as it is expressed in Article xvii., "At length, by God's mercy, those made sons of God by adoption attain to everlasting felicity."

This comparison might be pursued further, but we trust we may conclude, beyond controversy, that the Church of England teaches in *her Articles, her Service of Baptism, and her Catechism*, that REGENERATION is that gift of God by which the benefits of Christ's death are, for the first time, brought home and applied to the soul of an individual ; that therein sins are forgiven ; the Holy Ghost is conveyed to the party ; faith is confirmed, and an inheritance to everlasting life given. We have endeavoured to confine ourselves as much as possible to the language of the church, but we add the description of these benefits as they are given by other writers.

Bishop Bethell states :



“Regeneration consists in the forgiveness of sin, the gift, or earnest, or covenanted consignation of the influence of the Holy Ghost, considered independently of its moral operations and legitimate effects ; and a title to eternal life depending on the performance of certain stipulated conditions—that our own church, in conformity to the doctrine of Scripture and the opinion of Christian antiquity, determines this grant of grace to the season of baptism, under a full conviction that when the sacrament is administered agreeably to Christ’s institution, man receives the forgiveness of sin and the gift of the Holy Ghost through its intervention and instrumentality\*.”

Mr. Melvill says :

“ We have only maintained, that by the operation of the Holy Spirit in and through baptism, the child is brought into such a relation to God, so purged from the guilt of original sin, so gathered within the covenant of forgiveness, so consigned to all the blessings of adoption, that it may be declared impregnated with the elements of spiritual life ; elements, which if not wilfully crushed, shall shoot into efflorescence and vigour beneath the creative word of the Gospel of Christ †.”

\* Bishop Bethell on Baptismal Regeneration, p. 115.

† Melvill’s Sermons, vol. ii., Sermon 8, p. 244.

Hooker observes :

“ God will have baptism embraced not only as a sign or token what we receive, but also as an instrument or mean whereby we receive grace, because baptism is a sacrament, which God hath instituted in his church, to the end that they which receive the same might thereby be incorporated into Christ, and so through his most precious merit obtain as well that saving grace of imputation which taketh away all former guiltiness, as also that infused divine virtue of the Holy Ghost which giveth to the powers of the soul their first disposition towards future newness of life\*.”

With such an interpretation of regeneration, of which the church considers baptism to be *the sole appointed* means, we have to inquire whether this doctrine be in accordance with the word of God.

We might in this inquiry prefer a course and line of proof selected by ourselves, but as we feel compelled to expose the inconsistencies and strangely fanciful interpretations of the author of the tract, we will proceed by the path along which he conducts us.

But we cannot advance a step without ex-

\* Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, Book v. chap. 60.

claiming and protesting against what is the bare assumption of an individual, put forth without proof, and, as we believe, contradicted by the word of God : "The practice of Christ, the founder of baptism, was to regenerate souls without the use of baptism at all."

Where in the Scriptures is the term *regenerated*, or any other word bearing the least resemblance of meaning to it, applied to those who became followers of Christ during his life? There is no single instance, and therefore it is by no means surprising that "no mention is made of Christ's converts having been baptized with Christian baptism,—baptism in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost." In fact, it could not by possibility be the case. Shall we be told that St. John says, that "to such as received Christ, to them gave he power to become the sons of God"? But such, it will be admitted, were born of the Spirit, and we are expressly told that "the Spirit was not yet given," and the reason is added, "because Christ was not yet glorified." With this all other declarations harmonize : "It is expedient for you

that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come unto you, but if I depart I will send him unto you \*."

We might, therefore, at once dismiss the first section bearing upon "the practice of Christ, the founder of baptism;" for there is no warrant of Scripture to justify the application of the term "regenerate" to any person during the life of our Saviour. The parties to whom our attention is drawn were doubtless accepted, and *that* for the sake of Christ's merits, but they are not represented as *born of the Spirit*.

Let us examine the first case mentioned, that of the woman of Samaria. Our Lord, according to his ordinary practice of taking advantage of passing occurrences on which to found his instruction, opened a conversation with the woman at the well by asking her "to give him to drink." The woman's surprise was raised by the circumstance that a Jew should hold communication with herself, a Samaritan, and she expressed herself accordingly. Our Lord proceeds in reply

\* John xvi. 7.



further to excite her curiosity in regard to his person, "If thou knewest the gift of God \*, and who it is that saith unto thee, Give me to drink, thou wouldst have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water." Now in whatever latent sense our Lord intended his words, the woman understood them literally, as spoken of running water in opposition to water drawn from a well. Throughout the conversation the woman's thoughts were upon a temporal benefit, and it was only when our Lord evinced his knowledge of her sinful life that she considered him to be a prophet. To discover the meaning of our Lord's metaphorical language, we must appeal to other parts of Scripture. Now in the seventh chapter of St. John, verse 37, we read, that "In the last day, that great day of the feast, Jesus stood and cried, saying, If any man thirst, let him come to me and drink." This refers to the occasion of that solemn ceremonial when, in commemoration of the water supplied in the wilderness, the priest with great pomp and ceremony made an offering in the Temple of water drawn

\* "Hadst known what God gives."

from the pool in Siloam. It was the opinion of the Jews that this was typical of benefits that should at some time or other be bestowed from heaven upon men. St. John, speaking under inspiration, has supplied us with the real intent of the observation: "This spake he of the Spirit, which they who believe on him should receive," or (as here it is necessary for us to be precise) which *believers on him were* AT A FUTURE TIME *to receive*; and the reason is added, "for the Holy Ghost was not yet (given)," *i. e.* was not yet in the earth, "because Jesus was not yet glorified."

This will explain to us the conversation which our Lord had with the woman of Samaria, and will also prove that no case which occurred before our Saviour was glorified, can be called a being "born of the Spirit." We attempt not to know beyond what is revealed, but the whole tenour of the Gospel leads to the conclusion, that in every age persons have been accepted of God in Christ, though the particular grace of *regeneration* was not vouchsafed till the redemption was fully accomplished.



It is next asserted, that "the peculiar period of the institution of Christian baptism, which was coeval with the first establishment of a visible Christian church upon earth, naturally and necessarily induces the belief that it was designed to be the initiatory rite into that; and not, therefore, the instrument of regeneration, but the sign of profession and seal of faith." Unquestionably baptism was designed to be "the initiatory rite into the visible Christian church upon earth;" but how it *thence follows*, that it "is not the instrument of regeneration," is above our powers to discover.

We would rather, considering the spiritual nature of Christianity, infer, from the fact of baptism having been instituted as the initiatory rite into Christianity, that it would be the instrument of regeneration. But the reasoning in this section seems to us to be so irregular and so inconclusive, that we know not how we can better meet it than by setting forth what we believe to be the author's view of the matter. The public institution of Christian baptism, it might be expected, would be coeval with the event with which

it was mainly connected, and to which it was intended to have especial reference. This is presumed from the fact that the other sacrament, the Lord's Supper, was instituted immediately before the event to which it was to refer was fulfilled, in other words, his death. We have, therefore, to look for some novel fact presented in the history of Christianity associated with the institution of baptism, and to which the ordinance "must, in all probability\*," have been intended to refer. We find that the establishment of a visible Christian church immediately followed. It is therefore concluded †, that baptism *cannot be more* than the initiatory rite into the Christian church. We may add, that the same conclusion is sought to be drawn from analogy, circumcision being the initiatory

\* We cannot understand how a thing can be only "*probable*," while it *must* be.

† We wish for the conviction of such as ourselves, who are unable to see the justness of Mr. Molyneux's reasoning, that he had put this in the form of a syllogism, or, perhaps, should the learned divine again publish his views, he will allow us to ask this favour of him. We will ourselves attempt to give his reasoning in the form of an Enthymeme, "Baptism can have no property but one, for all admit that it possesses that one."

rite for admission to Judaism, the period for putting aside which had now arrived. Now inconclusive as this is upon every principle of just reasoning, we will still examine the position ; and first let us endeavour to acquire a right view of circumcision. It is granted that it was the initiatory rite for admission to Judaism, but withal it was the consignation of a covenant which God in condescension to human conceptions allowed to be made between Himself and man. The words of St. Paul to the Galatians are, "For I testify again to every man that is circumcised, that he is *a debtor to do the whole law*\*, " so that the Jew became bound by contract to perform the whole law ; and as, on his part, man was so bound, it pleased God to confirm to him through this token all the privileges attached to Judaism. Circumcision, therefore, was something more than a rite or ceremonial by which an entrance into Judaism was afforded ; it was also a consignation of certain privileges peculiar to Judaism, and an engagement on the child's part to the performance of certain duties. Ana-

\* Chap. v. 3.

logy would therefore incline us to consider that baptism also contains properties beyond that palpable one of being the initiatory rite for admission to Christianity. We should infer that baptism consigns to the subject all the privileges, and binds him to all the duties of Christianity. What these privileges are, will be seen.

A view of the scheme of redemption will lead us to the same conclusion. God having designed to save the world by his Son taking our nature upon him, and offering an atonement for sin, prepared mankind for his coming in the flesh by prophecies and a system of carnal ordinances typical of spiritual things under the Gospel dispensation. The type in every instance was inferior in all its properties and qualities to the antitype. The lamb without blemish stood not compared with the true Lamb of God. The promised land of Canaan was utterly insignificant with the heavenly Canaan. The brazen serpent was indeed a dead image, though it represented the Son of God on the cross. The Jewish sacrament of eating the passover was the commemoration of deliverance from

Egyptian slavery: the Christian sacrament of the Lord's Supper is the communion of the body and blood of Christ in commemoration of the far mightier deliverance from the bondage of sin and Satan. Another sacrament was ordained of Christ corresponding with the sacrament of circumcision, and therefore analogy would lead us to consider it to be endued with spiritual qualities resembling in kind, but in a far superior degree, the blessings communicated at circumcision; and such in fact is the doctrine of the Church of England.

It must not, moreover, be too readily conceded, that "the church of Christ was to be established openly and publicly in the world," "immediately after the Ascension." On the contrary, though the commission was *given immediately before the Ascension, the execution of it was suspended* till another mighty event should occur, without which the scheme of salvation was incomplete,—redemption without it being unavailable for man's final salvation. It is to the joint operation of the Trinity that man owes his salvation, and the Holy Ghost had not yet taken



up his abode on earth. The Apostles' commission was suspended till this was accomplished: "Tarry ye in the city of Jerusalem until ye be endued with power from on high\*." The Holy Ghost was to take up his abode among Christians, and hence we might presume, that, as the Apostles' commission was suspended, baptism has some connexion with the Holy Ghost taking up his abode in the hearts of believers. Correct reasoning should have led the author to this conclusion, and this would also have explained to him in what respect the initiatory rite of Christianity excels that of Judaism, as we shall perceive more particularly hereafter.

It is a bare assumption wholly devoid of proof, that any person, whether patriarch or prophet, or other holy man of old, or indeed any individual during our Lord's ministry, was *regenerated—born of the Spirit*. On the contrary, this is contradicted by the declaration that the Spirit was not yet given,—had not yet taken up his abode on earth. We might ask, *when* were the Apostles regenerated? Shall we be told, when they be-

\* Luke xxiv. 49.



came followers of Christ? Why, then, did our Saviour declare, and that too towards the conclusion of his ministry, that "unless they were converted and became as little children, they could not enter into the kingdom of heaven"? They had not for a certainty *at that time* entered into it; indeed it was not yet established. The Apostles had been encouraging notions and anticipations of temporal distinction in their Master's kingdom, and our Lord, knowing that his death, which was near at hand, would prove a severe shock and disappointment to their hopes, in compassion to their infirmity forewarned them, that they must turn (be converted) from these feelings of worldly pride and become humble-minded as little children, or they would not enter into the kingdom which he was about to establish. It is clear, therefore, that as the Apostles had not yet entered, they were not yet regenerated.

The author of the tract informs us respecting baptism, that he believes it to be "a sign of profession and seal of faith." It is to be wished that he had been more definite, and had informed us whether by this last expres-

sion he understands the same as some of the Greek fathers, who call it *σφραγὶς τῆς πίστεως*. Would he submit himself to their authority, they would give him clearer notions of the spiritual nature of baptism than he at present entertains.

The third section is introduced with the following proposition: "The practice of the Apostles was, not to baptize in order to regenerate, but require regeneration in order to baptize; which teaches that regeneration is not to be looked for as a consequence of baptism, but insisted on as a **qualification** for the reception of the rite."

We have now arrived at the section in which the cases of baptism recorded in Scripture have to be examined. The first case adduced is that of the Ethiopian eunuch. The chamberlain of Candace, a Jewish proselyte, had gone up to worship at Jerusalem. Returning in his carriage, he was occupied in reading the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah. Philip had been desired of the Holy Ghost to attach himself to the chariot; and when he found the eunuch reading the prophecy, he inquired of him whether he understood

what he read. The eunuch's reply was, How can I, except some man should guide me? Philip was then invited into the chariot, who, "beginning from that same Scripture, preached unto him Jesus." We are not expressly informed of any particulars; but the context proves that *baptism* must have been brought prominently forward, and its necessity enforced, for upon the first sight of water he exclaims, "See, here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" How is it possible to interpret this circumstance in any other way than that the eunuch, being desirous of deriving to himself the benefits of Christ's atonement\*, sought the application of that which Philip had taught him was the appointed means? He sought baptism, and his request to be baptized is complied with.

\* It should not fail to be noticed, that the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah is the well-known prophecy of Christ suffering death as an atonement for sin. The narrative informs us that the eunuch believed what Philip had taught him, and therefore he was desirous of bringing home to his own soul the blessings of this atonement; he consequently sought the application of the means. Nor should it be forgotten, that Philip had just before been baptizing many in Samaria, both men and women.

It is remarked upon this case, that "cordial faith was declared to be the absolute prerequisite." That faith, a belief that Jesus is the Son of God, is, in the case of an adult, a prerequisite for baptism, is universally admitted. Thus far we cordially agree with the author; but he adds, that this cordial faith, the prerequisite for baptism, is the fruit of regeneration. This we positively deny, and to justify our denial we need not more than the very passage of the first chapter of St. John's Gospel, which we are most surprised to find brought forward to uphold the contrary opinion. We cannot conceal our astonishment at the observations made upon this passage: "As many as received him, to them gave he power to become the sons of God, even to them which believe on his name; which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God.' Here, *to believe on his name* is declared to be *the result from being born of God*, to be *the fruit of regeneration*." What! the word came unto his own and his own as a body received him not, but as many (whether Jew or Gentile) as received him, upon them he bestows a certain privilege.



Shall it be said that the gift of this privilege was *antecedent to their reception of him*? We cannot sufficiently express our astonishment, nor can we possibly account for such a strange interpretation\*; but we trust we shall not be accused of want of charity to a brother, if we quote the words of Bishop Bethell as not altogether inapplicable to the case before us: "I refer to this—only because it exhibits a specimen of popular and current errors, and of the hardihood with which men, in their eagerness to condemn opinions which they have been accustomed to look upon with suspicion and dislike, substitute conjecture and imagination for facts." In our simplicity, we had apprehended that so far from faith being "the result from being born of God," that it was the condition upon which "the power to become the sons of God" was conferred. Had

\* We claim for ourselves a right feeling of charity towards a brother; but yet, under a solemn sense of duty, we are compelled to protest against such gross perversion of Scripture. We do not believe it to be wilful; but we do not perceive how it is possible to represent it otherwise than either wilful or ignorant. We most earnestly hope that Mr. Molyneux is more correct in his exposition of Scripture from the pulpit.



we read, that *to such sick persons as applied to a physician, to them gave he directions to recover their health*, we should have thought that the recovery of their health had resulted from the sick persons making application to the physician. No, says the acute author, the *sick persons' application to the physician is the result of the recovery of their health*. Persons "receive" Christ, or "believe on his name," and to them he gives "the power to become the sons of God." Though this gift is limited to those who *perform a condition* we are told that the *condition is the result—the fruit of the gift*. We repeat it, we cannot sufficiently express our astonishment at what every person of the most ordinary understanding must pronounce an utter absurdity.

The passage, however, is worthy of particular notice on various accounts, and not the least on account of a latent intimation that they who receive their new birth receive through some intermediate agency. St. John declares, "that our Saviour gave the power or authority\* to become the sons of God

\* In this passage we think that the word ἐξουσία means "authority," or "right," or "privilege." We are aware th

The power to *become so* was given to *them*, and yet they were born of God. The fact that men receive authority to become or to be made sons of God, does not derogate at all from the reality that they are "born of God." The remark of Hooker upon this point is unanswerable: "They that receive grace by sacraments or with sacraments, receive it from God and not from them. For of sacraments the very same is true which Solomon's wisdom observeth in the brazen serpent, 'He that turned towards it was not

the late learned and excellent Magee argues against this interpretation. That *ἐξουσία* bears either meaning, "power" (whether innate or delegated) or "authority," is unquestionable. As an instance of the former, we may adduce the words of our Saviour, Luke xii. 5: "Fear him, which, after he hath killed, hath *power* to cast into hell." In support of the latter we would quote the words of the Jews, Matthew xxi. 23: "By what *authority* doest thou these things? and who gave thee this authority?" With great and sincere submission to the late learned Archbishop of Dublin, we think that it does not argue less for the divinity of Christ, that he gave to believers the *authority* to become sons of God, than that he bestowed upon them the *power* to become such. The gift in either case is *his*, and as the effect of this gift is adoption into the family of *God*, we conceive that the Being who made this present, whether *power* (ability) or *authority*, must himself be God.

healed by the thing he saw, but by thee, O Saviour of all!"

Nor is this all that is remarkable in the passage of St. John, though this short treatise is not sufficient for a full evolution of the principle and doctrine which it tends to establish. Our Saviour gave the authority to become the sons of God to those who believe *into* his name.

Without entering fully upon the principle to which we allude, we may observe, that there is a marked difference observed between "believing" and "believing into." The former is a pre-requisite for coming to Christ, the latter implies an union with Christ, howsoever produced before the descent of the Holy Ghost, — after that event, produced through baptism as the instrument. We cannot forbear inviting attention to this important difference on the part of all, whose acquaintance with the original language of the New Testament will enable them to examine and form their estimate of the difference so generally observed. To assist them in this examination, we annex two lists\* of references

\* Matthew xxi. 25, 32 *bis*, xxvii. 42; Mark i. 15, xi. 31, xvi. 13, 14; Luke i. 20, xx. 5, xxiv. 25; John ii. 22, iv. 21,

to all the passages in the New Testament, where the word "believe" is employed with any word subjoined. As instances,—of one

50, v. 24, 38, 46, 47, vi. 30, viii. 31, 45, 46, x. 37, 38, xi. 26, 27, xii. 38; Acts viii. 13, 37, xiii. 12, xv. 11, xvi. 34, xviii. 8, xxiv. 14, xxvi. 27, xxvii. 25; Rom. iv. 3, 17, x. 9, 16; 1 Cor. xiii. 7; Gal. iii. 6; 2 Thess. ii. 12; 2 Tim. i. 12; Titus iii. 8; James ii. 23; 1 John iii. 23, iv. 1, 16, v. 10. Matthew xviii. 6; Mark ix. 42; John i. 12, ii. 11, 23, iii. 15, 16, 18, 36, iv. 39, vi. 29, 35, 40, 47, vii. 5, 31, 38, 39, 48, viii. 30, ix. 35, 36, x. 42, xi. 25, 26, 45, 48, xii. 11, 36, 37, 42, 44, 46, xiv. 1, 12, xvi. 9, xvii. 20; Acts ix. 42, x. 43, xi. 17, xiii. 48, xiv. 23, xvi. 31, xix. 4, xxii. 19; Rom. iv. 5, 24, ix. 33, x. 11, 14; Gal. ii. 16; Phil. i. 29; 1 Tim. i. 16; 1 Pet. i. 8, 21, ii. 6; 1 John v. 10, 13 *bis*.

In regard to these passages we will observe, that in the first list there are two places in the Acts, xvi. 34. and xviii. 8, where we meet πιστεύω and a dative in place of εἰς or ἐπὶ, but in some manuscript copies of the Testament the reading is in the former ἐπὶ τὸν Θεόν and in the latter εἰς τὸν Κύριον. In 1 John iii. 23. πιστεύω is followed by τῷ ὀνόματι; but as St. John is addressing believers who were already baptized, and is giving them a command, it would have been wrong to have used εἰς, and some manuscripts have in place of ὀνόματι, ὑπὸ αὐτοῦ. In several passages of the second list the preposition ἐπὶ is used, where the phraseology may be explained by Acts xi. 21, πολλοὶ τε ἀριθμὸς πιστεύσας ἐπέστρεψεν ἐπὶ τὸν Κύριον. We may here notice, that in 1 John v. 13. many manuscript copies have οἱ πιστεύοντες in place of καὶ ἵνα πιστεύητε, which words give a plain and very impressive sense, "These things

class, John iv. 21, "Believe me, that the hour cometh," &c.; of the other class, John vi. 35, "He that believeth on (*into*) me shall never thirst." Acts xiv. 23, "And when they

have I written unto you that believe on (*eis*) the name of the Son of God, that ye may know that ye who believe on (*eis*) the name of the Son of God have eternal life." We doubt not that a critical examination of the above passage, and a comparison with other similar phrases, would go far to establish the fact, that baptism is *implied* in all these passages, and that the doctrine of baptismal regeneration was so universally understood, that *eis* became joined to *πιστεῖν* without the introduction of βαπτίζουσαι.

The principle to which I have here alluded is the same upon which Bishop Bethell argues so effectually in the fifth chapter of his work on Baptismal Regeneration: "It is an undeniable rule of interpretation, that in passages which are plainly parallel, what is wanting in one text must be supplied from others that are fuller and more explicit. Thus since we are taught that we must be *born of water and of the Spirit*, that *baptism doth save us*, that *we are saved by the washing of regeneration*, and that *he that believeth and is baptized shall be saved*, when we meet with passages in which Christians are said to be *sons of God*, to *become children of God*, to *have been born again*, or to *have been born of God*, without mention of baptism, it follows that baptism is *implied*, and *virtually contained* in these phrases. In fact, if we suppose that our Saviour's precept was strictly complied with, and that the expressions connected with it were familiar to the church, since such phrases as to be *born again*, or to be *born of God*, would naturally suggest the



had ordained them elders in every church, and had prayed with fasting, they commended them to the Lord on whom they believed" (*into\* whom they had believed*).

In the case of the eunuch, Philip required a declaration of the pre-requisite for baptism, a sincere and hearty conviction of the truth of the things which he had been preaching to him. In the reply the eunuch says, "I believe (the fact) that Jesus Christ is the Son of God." Upon this he is baptized.

It is argued that the rule of Philip ought to be taken as the rule of all the Apostles, and *that* upon the undeniable ground, that there would be a consistent, harmonious practice observed by all the Apostles. We

idea of baptism to the disciples, the express mention of the sacramental action would be unnecessary. When, therefore, believers are said to have had *power given them to become the children of God*, and *to have been born of God*; when God is said to have *begotten us with the word of his truth*, and to have begotten us again to a lively hope; and when we are said to have been *born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible by the word of God*, according to this sure principle of interpretation, Baptism is *implied* in these passages, as a subordinate and collateral mean of grace."

\* *eis òν πεπιστεύκεισαν.*

admit it; but this does not decide the question at issue. Is this pre-requisite for baptism what the Scriptures denominate a "born again," or "of God"? The passage the first chapter of St. John declares, that reception of Christ is a pre-requisite for being born of God. The Church of England declares the same to be a pre-requisite for baptism (in the case of adults). In the second chapter of the Acts we find that converts were similarly instructed by St. Peter: "Repent," that is, (considering the meaning of the word, and the address which St. Peter had been making to the Jews,) "Turn from your disbelief of the claim of Jesus which induced you to slay him, and upon the evidence which you now behold, believe that he is true, and be baptized." What, let us inquire, was the object of St. Peter's address, but to induce his countrymen to avail themselves of the blessings which Christ had procured for them? and what means does he enjoin upon them to this end? "Be baptized:" the benefit resulting therefrom is added, "for the remission of sins." If words are to convey any meaning, the address of St. Peter amounts

to this : You have been guilty of great sin and wickedness in crucifying Jesus, whom God hath made both Lord and Christ. Do you desire that your sins should be put away from you ? then be baptized. Had St. Peter wished to confirm his word by the declaration of Jesus himself, he would have added, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved." We must also observe, that besides the remission of sins, St. Peter declares the gift of the Holy Ghost would ensue from baptism : "Repent, and be baptized every one of you in the name of Jesus Christ for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost."

The case of Lydia, to which our attention is next called, tends to confirm us as to the high importance of baptism ; for no time was lost after she was persuaded of the truth of what St. Paul preached, before she was baptized. It may be advisable, however, to correct an error into which the author of the tract, in common with the opponents of baptismal regeneration, has fallen. We are told that "the Lord opened her heart, and disposed her to a reception of the truth." This

is rather a perversion than exposition of Scripture. In the first place, "opened her heart" refers to the *understanding*, and not to the *disposition of the mind*. Our Saviour, when conversing with the two disciples on the road to Emmaus, after his resurrection, utters this lament—not, as is too commonly understood rebuke—"O fools and *slow of heart* to believe all that the prophets have written." They believed to the best of their *understanding*, but they were *slow of heart* to apply the prophecies; our Lord therefore, in compassion to their ignorance, explained to them the predictions respecting himself. In II. Maccabees, i. 4, we meet with the self-same expression: "and open your hearts in his law and commandments," where the words cannot be understood to mean other than *enlarge your understanding* \*.

But even were we to grant that the sacred Scriptures declare that the Lord disposed the heart of Lydia, still we have no authority for

\* Themistius uses the same expression, "My breast and my heart are opened, my soul becomes brighter, and my eyes of my understanding sharper; therefore I see things which before I was unable to see."



saying, that the Lord disposed her heart *to receive, i. e.* to believe and embrace the truth. What we *are* told is, that Lydia was disposed "*to attend,*" to give heed *to the things spoken* by St. Paul. It had pleased God to call Macedonia to the knowledge of the Gospel, and it was but consistent with God's goodness, and indeed with the promise of Christ\*, that devout Lydia should have an opportunity afforded her of hearing the glad tidings of salvation by the name of Jesus. All the instruction that we can derive from the narrative is, that a desire to do God's will is favourably noticed by Him. Devout Lydia was vouchsafed the opportunity of hearing the preaching of St. Paul; she was persuaded of the truth, and was, in consequence, baptized. There is not a word in the narrative upon which there can be suspended the thought that any regeneration took place before baptism.

What, again, is the case of Cornelius? The Apostles did not yet comprehend the full and extensive nature of the Gospel dispensation; in their contracted notions they confined it to their own countrymen. It required a special

\* John vii. 17.



miracle from heaven to convince as well that God had opened the door of salvation to the Gentiles, as the Gentiles themselves, that God designed to confer upon them all the ritual, and therefore *invisible*, blessings of the Gospel. A *visible* token was needed, and it was granted. St. Peter, we are informed, proceeded to the house of Cornelius in obedience to an heavenly vision, and preached Jesus. We are expressly told, that the Apostle uttered these words: "To Him give all prophets witness, that through his name whatsoever believeth in (into) Him receiveth remission of sins;" and this was the time when the interposition of Heaven was needed to assure the Gentiles of the truth of St. Peter's declaration, and this interposition was vouchsafed; the Holy Ghost visibly descended upon all who heard the word. How, then, was Peter to act? As he said in his defence at Jerusalem, "What was I that I could withstand God?" The descent of the Holy Ghost proved the will of Heaven in regard to the Gentiles. This miraculous effusion was not for the sanctification of those who received it; it was a merciful sign from heaven to

Gentiles, as the like sign had been before given to the Jews. The Gentiles were now, in common with the Jews, to receive remission of sins, believing in the name of Christ. St. Peter therefore, as he says, dared not to withstand this heavenly sign; and how does he act in order that he may comply with its intent? Be it observed, that the visible descent of the Holy Ghost was the assurance that remission of sins was to be granted to the Gentiles; and as St. Peter dared not to oppose God's will, he commands that Cornelius and his household should be baptized: "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized, which have received the Holy Ghost as well as we? And he commanded them to be baptized in the name of the Lord." If the context did not, in the plainest possible manner, show the end to be thereby obtained, we might appeal to St. Peter himself. His exhortations after the first descent of the Holy Ghost on the day of Pentecost declare the end to be obtained by baptism: "*Repent, and be baptized every one of you for the remission of sins, and ye shall receive the gift of the Holy Ghost.*"

In all these cases of adults a pre-requisite was undoubtedly necessary; but the prominent feature bearing upon the question at issue is, that *remission of sins is attached to baptism*. We presume, that if sins are *remitted*, i.e. *put away*, the soul is at that time *holy*; though, as our church maintains, "the infection of nature doth remain." The cases then, to which the author of the tract calls our attention, prove that remission of sins takes place at baptism.

The history of St. Paul's conversion will surprisingly confirm this view. We are rightly told that "Ananias expressly declared that the Lord had sent him to Paul, that he might receive his sight and be filled with the Holy Ghost;" and we must refer to the Scripture account to see how these objects were carried out, for we might presume that the Scriptures would give us an account. The words in chapter ix. are, "And immediately there fell from his eyes as it had been scales and he received his sight forthwith." Thus far the *first* object of Ananias's visit was effected. St. Paul had also to be "filled with the Holy Ghost;" we might therefore inu-

gine that the succeeding words would explain how *this* object of Ananias's visit was effected; and as we have seen that Ananias was the instrument for the miraculous restoration of sight, we might infer that he would also be employed as the instrument for St. Paul's receiving the Holy Ghost. Indeed this follows from Ananias's declaration, that he had been sent, *that Saul might be filled with the Holy Ghost*. The succeeding words are, "And he arose and was baptized." Surely, without further remark, we might draw the conclusion that the Holy Ghost was conveyed in baptism. We are not, however, left to our own conjecture, for the Scriptures, as will be conceded to us, "cannot be various and contradictory." Ananias states that he was sent for *two* objects, namely, "that Saul might receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost." The narrative informs us, that "he received his sight," and thus far the *first* object was effected. Corresponding to and in explanation of the second object of Ananias's visit, we are told, "and he was baptized." Now St. Peter had exhorted the Jews to be "bap-



tized for the remission of sins, and they should receive the Holy Ghost." If the Scriptures, then, speak harmoniously and consistently, need we further proof that the second object of Ananias's visit was accomplished by Saul being baptized. It appears to us that no honest, no straightforward reasoning can get rid of the conclusion, that Saul was filled with the Holy Ghost *in and by his baptism.*

In confirmation of this conclusion we must appeal to the Apostle himself. In chapter xxii. of the Acts, when he pleads before the chief-captain, he relates the circumstances of his conversion, as far as he himself was a party concerned and a witness. The particulars of Ananias's visit are thus detailed: "And one Ananias, a devout man according to the law, having a good report of all the Jews which dwelt there, came unto me, and stood and said unto me, Brother Saul, receive thy sight. And the same hour I looked up upon him. And he said, The God of our fathers hath chosen thee, that thou shouldst know his will, and see that Just One, and shouldst hear the voice of his mouth; for



thou shalt be his witness unto all men of what thou hast seen and heard. And now why tarriest thou? Arise, and *be baptized and wash away thy sins*, calling on the name of the Lord." Upon the authority of the Apostle, therefore, we are assured that his sins were not washed away or remitted, *i.e.* put away, till he was baptized. He was a chosen vessel; he had been vouchsafed a miraculous appearance of the glorified Jesus; he had submitted himself to his Redeemer's will, "Lord, what wilt thou have me to do?" His Saviour had even declared, "Behold he prayeth;" his sight is miraculously restored to him, and yet, notwithstanding all these tokens of God's good-will towards him, his sins *were not yet put away*; on the contrary, he is exhorted by Ananias (who, be it remembered, had been sent by our Lord himself) *to be baptized*, in order that his sins might be washed away. It is no wonder, then, that this same Apostle who had had his own sins thus remitted in baptism, should inform Titus, that God, "according to his mercy, doth save us by the washing of regeneration and renewing of the Holy Ghost." Upon

this passage we shall have occasion to remark, but we cannot forbear introducing it here, in order to show the harmony which runs through the Scriptures, when they are interpreted in their plain, consistent sense. The admirable Hooker's sentiments upon this point are worthy to be transcribed\*: "I hold it for a most infallible rule in expositions of sacred Scripture, that where a literal construction will stand, the farthest from the letter is commonly the worst. There is nothing more dangerous than this licentious and deluding art, which changeth the meaning of words as alchymy doth, or would do, the substance of metals, making of anything what it listeth, and bringeth in the end all truth to nothing. Or howsoever such voluntary exercise of wit might be borne with otherwise, yet in places which usually serve, as this doth concerning regeneration by water and the Holy Ghost, to be alleged for grounds and principles, less is permitted."

We have now to examine section iv., in which our author declares that "Scripture positively teaches that regeneration is instru-

\* Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, book v. chap. 59.

mentally effected, not by baptism, but by the word of God\*.”

Before we examine the texts by which this position is attempted to be maintained, we may remark that the opponents of baptismal regeneration seem not to agree among themselves as to the means by which regeneration is effected. By another writer, to whom I have already referred as of acknowledged credit and learning, it is affirmed, that *moral*† regeneration is produced in *three* different ways. In one of these three ways the author of the tract agrees, namely, that it is produced by the word of God ; in opposition, however, to Mr. Faber, he declares that regeneration is not effected by baptism. In proof of his position, we are referred, first to the declaration of St. Peter, 1 Peter, iii. 21: “The like figure whereunto *even* baptism

\* Page 21.

† It would take us into too wide a field to argue against the position of the learned Mr. Faber upon this point ; but we would observe, that though Mr. Faber speaks of several opinions held upon the subject of regeneration, he appears not, to me, to take the *one* opinion of the Church of England, and to argue upon it.

doth (also\*) now save us; not the putting away the filth of the flesh, but the answering of a good conscience toward God, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ."

To examine this sentence we must divide it. Two things are spoken of, a type and an antitype,—the ark the type, baptism the antitype †; it is also declared, that as the ark did actually save persons, so does baptism now save.

So closely do the type and antitype correspond, that, we may observe, Noah and his family were saved by entering into the ark and so likewise are Christians saved by entering into the water of baptism. Such is the parallelism drawn by St. Peter, who doubtless fearing that ignorant persons might estimate baptism by the outward ceremony only, warns Christians that they are not

\* "Also" is unfortunately omitted in Molyneux's translation. It is unfortunate, because the word is important in declaring according to St. Peter, that there is actually a salvation through baptism, as there was through the ark.

† The word "figure" is literally *antitype*, that which answers to the type; we might express the same by "the mould" and "the cast," or rather by "the plan" and "the building," "the model" and "the original."



to estimate the sacrament, as though it were "a putting away of the filth of the flesh," which could not be salvation, but rather they should remember its spiritual nature, "the answer of a good conscience towards God;" or, the answer which a good conscience makes towards God. St. Peter therefore, if we understand him rightly, says, that we are actually *saved by baptism*, as eight persons were *saved by the ark*; that baptism is to be understood as something beyond the outward visible ceremony of washing the flesh, and rather as the answer which a good conscience is thereby enabled to make towards God. In order that a conscience may in purity answer towards God, the sins of the soul must be put away, as this same Apostle has on various other occasions declared, that they are remitted in baptism.

We are next referred to St. John, iii. 5, and Titus iii. 5, because the church interprets these passages of baptism. The former of them is the emphatic declaration of our Saviour, "Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of Heaven."



Before we enter upon this passage, we will quote the judicious Hooker upon the point\*: “To hide the general consent of antiquity agreeing in the literal interpretation [of this passage], they cunningly affirm that ‘certain’ have taken those words of material water, when they know that *of all the ancients there is not one to be named that ever doth otherwise either expound or allege the place than as implying external baptism.* Shall that which hath always received this and no other construction, be now disguised with the toy of novelty? Must we now, at the only show of a *critical conceit*, without any more deliberation, utterly condemn them of error, which will not admit that fire in the words of John is quenched with the name of the Holy Ghost, or with the name of the Spirit, *water dried up* in the words of Christ?”

“When the letter of the law hath two things plainly and expressly specified, *water* and *the Spirit*,—water as a duty required on our parts, the Spirit as a gift which God bestoweth,—there is danger in presuming so to interpret it, as if the clause which concerneth ourselves

\* Hooker's Ecclesiastical Polity, book v. chap. 59.

were more than needeth. *We may by such rare expositions attain perhaps in the end to be thought witty, but with ill advice."*

It was attempted in Hooker's time to swamp the *water* (if I may be allowed the expression), for it was far too troublesome while it remained. Drain it off,—dry it up,—or otherwise get rid of it by a figure, for, so long as it stands literally *water*, it allows of no escape. Since the days of Hooker the same sentiments have been held; but now, forsooth, our author, who floats along upon the surface, without diving very deeply, starts a new criticism. We cannot do justice to such a rare specimen of biblical criticism without quoting the observations at length: "Our Lord says in the text just quoted, John iii. 5, 'Except a man be born of water and of the Spirit, he cannot enter into the kingdom of God.' Now let this text speak for itself, and no addition be made to the statement it contains, and what connexion, I ask, is here seen to exist between baptism and regeneration? The necessity of being born *both* of water and of the Spirit is urged, it is true; but what is said to intimate that they

are necessarily attendant one on the other or united as cause and effect—means an end? Had our Lord said, ‘Except a man be born of water and *so* of the Spirit,’ then their necessary connexion, and dependence of the latter on the former, had been decisively proved; it might well have been maintained and none could have denied it; but as the sentence now stands, there is not a syllable to show it. The utmost it expresses is, that two things are requisite, baptism and regeneration,—or, to be born of water and of the Spirit. These things may be connected and dependent one on the other, or they may not. The one may be the means of the other, or it may not, but this is not determined here and to attempt therefore to determine it in such a case, and to assume, on the ground of such a passage, that baptism is the specially appointed means of regeneration, is to form our principles, not from the Bible, but from our own preconceived notions; is to go to God’s word, not to be taught in God’s way\*

\* And so,—all the commentators and interpreters of the Testament, the Greek and Latin fathers, the reformers, the divines to the present day, “have gone to God’s word, not

but to interpret in our own. From this text then, whatever else we may learn, we certainly do not learn the doctrine of baptismal regeneration; the most that it can be thought to teach is, I repeat, that baptism and regeneration are both requisite; but as to their connexion, or dependence one on the other, not a word is said, and no such doctrine can therefore with any propriety, or without the greatest impropriety, be assumed from it." Such criticism, we presume, was not intended for persons at all acquainted with the original language of the New Testament, and therefore we omit all allusion to the utter impossibility of such a meaning being extracted, with a feeling which we should be sorry to express; yet we cannot forbear stating, that in our judgment such criticism, opposed as it is to the phraseology of the English language in every-day conversation, is positively an insult to the understanding of ordinary

to be taught in God's way!" and the Rev. Capel Molyneux, B.A., is the first since the days of St. John who suffers himself "to be thus taught in God's way." "We may," says Hooker, "by such rare expositions, attain perhaps in the end to be thought witty, but with ill advice."

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"THOUGH I SHALL BE BORN OF WATER AND OF  
THE SPIRIT, THEN THEIR NECESSARY CONNECTION  
AND DEPENDENCE OF THE LATTER ON THE FORMER  
HAD BEEN DEMONSTRATED." WE HAD  
THOUGHT THAT THE INTERPRETATION TO BE DERIVED  
FROM OUR SAVIOR'S WORDS WAS, THAT THE AL-

\* It is to be wished that Mr. McTear had, in a note,  
said how he thinks this would have been expressed in the  
Greek language, and how what he thinks the Greek would  
have been if our Saviour had intended, what it has always  
been heretofore considered that he did intend, namely, that  
in every Christian there has taken place a birth brought  
about by the joint agency of water and the Spirit: the words  
are of *Water and Spirit*.



mighty, designing to confer a spiritual benefit upon mankind, and *that* through the operation of the Holy Spirit, was in mercy pleased to associate therewith a material substance, in order that men, relying on his promise, might know of a surety that in the use of the outward means the spiritual blessing was invisibly conveyed. He moreover was pleased, for our benefit, to select that outward token which would most aptly represent to our senses the Spirit's invisible working upon souls. As water cleanses the body from the defilement which it may have contracted, so does the Spirit cleanse the soul of its defilement; but as the body in its daily occupations, so the soul in its ordinary associations is liable to contract fresh defilement. Thus far the parallel holds; but the Spirit abides, and will avail to a repeated cleansing,—to a renewing so often as its aid is sought with sincerity and settled purpose.

We may further observe, that we learn from the passage before us, that our Saviour was pleased to teach us that no man has the power of entering into his kingdom but by

the means designated,—a being born of water and the Spirit; and thus the passage throws light upon St. John's words in the 1st chapter: "As many as received Him to them gave he power to become the sons of God, which were born, not of blood, nor of the will of the flesh, nor of the will of man, but of God." The passage, we say, explains how it is that men should have the power to become sons, and that, when so born, they should be born of God, for they are born of water and of the Spirit. We have therefore to employ the means enjoined upon us, and then, in full faith, to rely upon God that he will, by his invisible working, give spiritual effect to his appointed ordinance.

The passage from Titus iii. 5. receives a more lengthened notice than any other; but we cannot imagine that the author could ever have been aware of the fact, that the unanimous voice of antiquity interprets this passage of baptism—nay, that all the most enlightened interpreters of modern times are agreed upon the point. As an instance, Mr. Faber in his work on the doctrine of reg-

neration adduces the passage in a list to prove that baptism is a means\* of regeneration. With this universal agreement of the learned in ancient and modern times, it would really be as idle as presumptuous to allege any argument in support of it. This would be needless in the case of others, and ineffectual for one who could put into print the following conclusion to six pages of remarks upon the text: "Adopt, then, what interpretation we will, and we are at a loss to perceive how any argument can be furnished by this passage in favour of the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. It seems to have no reference to it, nor any connexion with it, whatever." So says the author of the tract; and with the most entire self-complacency, the most perfect self-confidence, with all the assurance which ignorance alone could give, pronounces his condemnation of all the learned men of every past age of Christianity,—all of the present day, one of the deepest

\* This learned divine, who must ever be spoken of with respect, considers and endeavours to prove that there are *other* means of *moral* regeneration. We know of only *one* regeneration, and one means for it.

scriptural research and acute criticism. Had the author's remarks extended over, not six, but sixty or six hundred pages, we must be allowed to think that not many persons would be swayed by criticism of which the six pages afford a sample. We may safely leave it to the judgment of our readers to estimate the *learning* and the *acumen* displayed in the following *simple* exposition of the sacred word of God: "Our Lord plainly expresses that baptism and regeneration are *two things—distinct things*—for he does not say, 'born of water *or* of the Spirit,' but 'born of water *and*\* of the Spirit'; and therefore to interpret

\* Mr. Molyneux being a clergyman of the Church of England, and also a Bachelor of Arts of one of our Universities, must have undergone some examination. Were it not for this evidence offering a presumption that he is acquainted with the Greek language, we should have been inclined to imagine, that the writer of such a remark was ignorant of even the Greek characters. We cannot, however, acquit Mr. Molyneux of the most culpable neglect in not opening his Greek Testament upon the passage. It would have saved him from so committing himself as he has done. 'Ἐξ ὕδατος—διὰ λουτροῦ παλιγγενεσίας—λόγῳ ἀληθείας—διὰ τοῦ εὐαγγελίου—ἐκ σποράς—διὰ λόγου—all forms of expressions are jumbled together. We recommend to Mr. Molyneux's most serious consideration the following remark



the passage before us, or any other, so as to identify them, is manifestly erroneous and inadmissible." We must confess, that we, in our simplicity, should have imagined, had our Lord made use of the expression, "born of water *or* of the Spirit," that it had been his intention to authorize *two births*, by *either* of which an entrance into the kingdom of heaven might be obtained. For persons of simple understanding like ourselves we may state, that if we had been told that we might proceed to London by water *or* by land, we should have understood that there were *two* means open to our choice, and we think that ordinary readers would understand the same. In like manner we had imagined, that by the words employed by our Lord we were to learn that one effect, denominated *a birth*, is brought about by the combined agency of two very different things, one of these being

of Locke, and especially so, if he desires "to go to God's word to be taught in God's way, and not to form his principles from his own preconceived notions!"—"A verbal concordance leads not always to texts of the same meaning; and one may observe how apt that is to *jumble* together passages of Scripture, and thereby disturb the true meaning of Holy Scripture."



a material substance, "water,"—the other being "the Spirit." We might have imagined that this interpretation, if it needed elucidation, might have been confirmed by a simple example, namely, that *a house may be built of bricks AND mortar*; for we presume it will be understood by the expression, that these two substances are so moulded together as by their artificial combination to form a dwelling; yet the author of the tract explains to us that this expression is to assure us that there are *two* houses,—*distinct* houses,—*one* built of mortar, and *another* of bricks.

We now proceed to notice some texts which are adduced to prove that "regeneration is not effected by means of baptism, but through the instrumentality of the word of God." They are the following: James i. 18, "Of his own will begat He us with the word of truth." 1 Peter, i. 23, "Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God." 1 Cor. iv. 15, "In Christ Jesus have I begotten you through the Gospel." Upon these passages in general we would offer two remarks; first—

It would be difficult to find any important

doctrine of the Gospel which may not appear, at first sight, to be contradicted by other passages of Scripture, though the application of acknowledged rules of criticism removes the apparent contradiction; it is therefore not at all surprising that such should be the case in regard to the doctrine of baptismal regeneration. Secondly, as it could not be necessary that the direct means of regeneration should be expressed on all occasions, if by other passages it is proved to take place at baptism, then baptism is *implied* in all those passages where it is not expressed.

Now in regard to the last of the texts quoted, namely, "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel," we may set it aside, as not at all bearing upon the question. St. Paul is not speaking of *Gospel regeneration*, "I write not these things to shame you, but as *my beloved sons* I warn you. For though ye have ten thousand instructors, yet have ye not many *fathers*; for in [not into] Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel." St. Paul here speaks of his own *paternity*, and the correlative terms *father* and *son* at once exclude Gospel regeneration.

The Corinthians were *St. Paul's* sons, he was their *father*. In whatever sense, therefore, the expression is intended, the Corinthians were born of St. Paul, and not "of God." The Apostle, in his Epistle to Philemon, employs the same phraseology respecting Onesimus, verse 10, "I beseech thee for my son Onesimus, whom I have begotten in my bonds:" and also in his Epistle to the Galatians, iv. 19, "My little children, of whom I travail in birth again until Christ be formed in you." These passages are sufficient to show that he is not speaking of *Gospel regeneration*, but adopting a style of language to mark his affectionate feeling towards the parties whom he had brought over to Christianity.

Let us now examine the passage from the Epistle of St. James, i. 18: "Of his own will begat He us with the word of truth." This is one of the texts of which it is declared that they "need no comment; that in the plainest possible terms they assert the truth, that regeneration is not effected by means of baptism, but through the instrumentality of the word of God." Comment certainly would

be needless on the part of one who, from any cause whatever, can fancy that our Lord speaks of *two* births under the expression, "born of water and *of* the Spirit," or who can imagine that in the phrases "born *of* water and the Spirit,"—"begat us *with* the word of truth,"—"born again of incorruptible seed *by* the word of God,"—"begotten you *through* the Gospel," the particles (even in the English translation) "*of*," "*with*," "*by*," "*through*," are all to be taken in the same sense. As, however, we are not prepared so to read our Bibles, and especially as we remember that *three* very different forms exist in the original to express these *four* words, we must be allowed to comment on the texts, and seek from the context in each case the intent of the writer. This, in the case of St. James, will show that "the word of truth" makes not the remotest allusion to the instrument or mean of regeneration. It was manifestly St. James's object to establish in the minds of those to whom he was writing a confident reliance upon the promise of God. In verse 6 he says, "Let a man ask in faith, nothing wavering. For he that wavereth is like a



wave of the sea driven with the wind and tossed; for let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord." In the 11th and following verses the argument is, that *earthly things come to an end*; but that the Christian who "is tried shall receive the crown of life which the Lord hath promised to them that love him." So in the 17th verse, "Every good gift and every perfect gift is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, *with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning*;" and then immediately follow the words quoted, "*Of his own will* begat he us *with the word of truth*." The question then upon which these words were introduced was, not *whether they were begotten, or by what means they were begotten*, but, "*was the promise implied in their being begotten of God to be relied on?*" In other words, was the promise *a word of truth* or not? This question St. James answers. It was of God's own free will that he begat us; and as with him there is "*no variableness, neither shadow of turning*," there is nothing that can prevent his unchangeable will and object in our birth of Him being accom-



plished: "He begat us with the word of *truth*," so that we may confidently rely upon his promise. This will be sufficient to show that the expression "word of truth" was never employed by St. James to allude to the instrument or mean of regeneration, as indeed it would have been beside his purpose to speak of it.

Still less can it be gathered from the passage of St. Peter that regeneration is effected *by the word*. This text, again, deserves a little "comment," though it will be of the same kind and to a similar purport with that which we made upon the previous passage. The expression here rendered "by the word of God" is adduced in proof of the imperishable nature of the new life. It would be well in this case to inquire what was the question before the Apostle; what was the tenor and drift of his argument? It was to explain, not *how* Christians are begotten again, *i. e.* by what means, but what the *nature* of the new birth is; is it *corruptible* or *incorruptible*? It was St. Peter's object to encourage Christians in a "hope to the end for the grace [gift] that is to be brought unto them at the reve-

lation of Jesus Christ," and to urge upon them a corresponding practice, inasmuch as they had been born, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible\* ;" and in proof of this, he asserts that "the word," *i. e.* the declaration, "of God liveth and abideth for ever:" "Pass the time of your sojourning here in fear," for the life of man upon the earth is short; but you are begotten again of an incorruptible seed, "through the word of God, which liveth and abideth for ever." This expression, then, as employed by the Apostle, proves the imperishable nature of the new or second birth. The two succeeding verses, quoted from the Psalms, remove all doubt upon the subject: "For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away; but the word of the Lord endureth for ever:" and the Apostle adds, "and this is the word which by the Gospel is preached unto you," or the promise which has brought glad tidings upon (into) you.

\* Here we are to understand the word "of" in the same sense as in the words of our Saviour, "Except a man be born of water and the Spirit."

Yet these are the texts which, it is alleged, prove that "regeneration is effected through instrumentality of the word of God;" and in further confirmation of the point, we are referred to the declaration of St. Paul, Cor. i. 14, "I thank God I baptized none of you, but Crispus and Gaius."

Having shown the utter inapplicability to Gospel regeneration of the passage quoted before, "In Christ Jesus I have begotten you through the Gospel," we might safely pass by the practice of St. Paul as stated to the Corinthians; but it is one of those plausible arguments that pass for solid proof with persons who seek only to establish their own principles. It must be remembered that religious differences had sprung up among the Corinthians, who appeared to range themselves under different leaders, saying, every one of them, "I am of Paul, and I of Apollos, and I of Cephas, and I of Christ." These divisions struck at the root of Christianity,—the cross of Christ; and therefore the Apostle reproves the Corinthians, and at the same time expresses his satisfaction that he had baptized but few of them, "lest it might be

said that he had baptized in (into) his own name." Now the first instruction which we may derive from this account is the necessity of baptism; for the Apostle directly implies, that *all* the Corinthian converts were baptized: we are also supplied with an indirect proof of baptismal regeneration, for thereby only can we with perfect consistence account for St. Paul addressing them all as "having been sanctified in Christ Jesus," as "called," as "saints," as "members of Christ," and as "those whose bodies were made the temples of the Holy Ghost, which was in them,"—while at the same time these Corinthians, of whom we presume it will be admitted that they were regenerate, were "carnal and not spiritual." And all this is perfectly consistent too with the Apostle's declaration, that Christ "sent him not to baptize, but to preach." The preaching the Gospel, whether to Jews or Gentiles, required especial powers and qualifications, those miraculous gifts of tongues, &c. with which the Apostles were endued from on high; while inferior ministers were sufficient for the purpose of baptism. The gift of God depended not in any



degree on the minister who baptized. This will explain why the Apostles in their journeys always took with them assistants\*.

The terms of the Apostle's commission, as given by himself, are adduced in proof that the regeneration of souls is effected, "not by baptism, but by preaching the Gospel." "Christ's own words," we are told, "are, 'I send thee [to the Gentiles] to open their eyes, and to turn them from darkness to light, and from the power of Satan unto God, *that they may receive forgiveness of sins, and an inheritance among them that are sanctified, by faith that is in [into] me.*'" Thus we perceive the object of St. Paul's *converting* the Gentiles is by the express words of Christ himself declared to be, that they *might receive remission of sins and an inheritance among them that are sanctified by faith into him*. By what instrument or means this object of their conversion† is brought

\* See Acts x. 23; xv. 39, 40.

† Let it be carefully observed, that St. Paul's commission was *to convert the Gentiles* with a view to a further spiritual benefit to be derived to them,—*forgiveness of sins and an inheritance to life*.



about is not expressly stated, we must therefore appeal to other parts of Scripture for the information. Now in chapter xxii. of the Acts, St. Paul tells us how, *in his own case*, this object of his conversion was obtained. He was converted on the road to Damascus, and remained three days without sight before Ananias was sent to him, when, as St. Paul informs us, *his sins were washed away in baptism*. As, therefore, his commission was to bring over the Gentiles by preaching the Gospel *with a view to their receiving remission of sins*, and as St. Paul himself, after his conversion, received this blessing *through baptism*, the natural inference is, that the like benefit was conveyed to others *by the same means*. Indeed, as the Gospel is an harmonious system, this must have been the case, for St. Peter enjoined upon the Jews to repent and *be baptized* for this object,—*for the remission of sins*; and our Lord himself, when he commissioned the Apostles to preach the Gospel, adds as the object, “He that believeth and is baptized *shall be saved*.” Another Evangelist gives this commission in the words, “that repentance and *remission of*

*sins* were to be preached to all nations." What then, though St. Paul did not baptize?—what then, that his commission was to preach the Gospel? The end to be obtained was still *remission of sins*, and this remission was to be obtained through *baptism*. St. Paul's commission was to prepare\* the Gentiles for this solemn ordinance. The commission to all the Apostles was unquestionably the same; that which St. Paul received was no other than that which our Saviour had given to the rest. This we have seen was to preach the glad tidings of salvation, and to enjoin *baptism* as the means by which this was to be obtained. In conformity with this commission, and in accordance with the practice of St. Paul, we read that St. Peter preached

\* We would here call attention to the precise and exact manner in which our church follows the practice of the Apostles. It was *their* especial office to prepare men for baptism, though this office might be delegated to ministers appointed for the purpose. Thus Philip the Deacon was sent into Samaria. Now, by the Rubric prefixed to the "Baptism of such as are of riper years," it will be seen that the minister of a parish (the curate) has no authority to baptize such, until *the Bishop, or some minister appointed by him*, has ascertained the fitness of the party.

Jesus, and though he did not *himself baptize*, he commanded baptism to be administered. In the case of Cornelius and his house, we read, that Peter said, "Can any man forbid water that these should not be baptized as well as we? and he *commanded them to be baptized* in the name of the Lord."

We now arrive at the last section, in which it is stated, that, "in opposition to baptismal regeneration, Scripture teaches that certain effects invariably follow regeneration, which, in multitudes, and far the greater proportion, do not attend baptism."

This, we believe, is commonly considered the stronghold that the opponents of baptismal regeneration take up, and therefore it does not surprise us that it is maintained by the author of the tract before us. The error of persons who allege the wicked lives of baptized persons as an argument against baptismal regeneration consists in this,—they confound *regeneration* with the *duties* which are obligatory upon persons regenerated. The former is the sole undisputed, unmerited *gift of God*,—the latter is the *test* by which the regenerated will be judged.

The former is that act by which a party is placed in a condition to work out his final salvation,—the latter regards the manner in which the party avails himself of the privileges to which he has been admitted.

As the purpose of God in the regeneration of a man is his final salvation, the Scriptures when they speak, not of individuals, but of the *essential character* of a person regenerated, they ascribe to him those qualities which God manifestly intended should be prominent features in him, and which will invariably show themselves in all who *continue* to entertain a right sense of the relation in which they stand to their God.

The subject to which this section of the tract alludes having been treated by Bishop Bethell in such a masterly style and with the deep gravity which its importance requires, we most earnestly recommend to our readers to examine for themselves the arguments and statements of that learned prelate\*. With a recollection of the feelings produced in our

\* A General View of the Doctrine of Regeneration in Baptism, by the Right Rev. Christopher Bethell, D.D., Lord Bishop of Bangor.



minds by the perusal of those arguments, we acknowledge ourselves utterly inadequate to do justice to the subject. We mean not, however, to pass it by; but before we attempt to offer our opinion, we would desire to correct an error into which the author of the tract, in common with other opponents of baptismal regeneration, has fallen. He says, that Simon Magus, though he was baptized, was not regenerated: this excites our astonishment, and shows to what palpable contradictions an unscriptural view of regeneration necessarily leads. In page 17, we are told that "no persons were baptized, whose baptism is recorded in the Scripture, who were not first supposed\* to be regenerate."

\* We cannot imagine that Mr. Molyneux introduced this word as a loop-hole for escape, and we are persuaded that he would not seek to avail himself of what would in our judgment be little better than a subterfuge. We consider that Mr. Molyneux in the passage intended to avow, that in all the recorded cases of baptism, regeneration preceded baptism. In justification of this opinion we have to state, that in all the cases mentioned in Section iii., evidence is sought in matters antecedently to baptism, without any allusion being made to after habits of life. The eunuch *believed*, the ripe fruit of regeneration; the three thousand were "pricked (bowed down) in their heart," and therefore were



In the same page we are also told, "that to believe on the name of Christ is declared to be the fruit of regeneration,—that faith is the effect, regeneration the cause;" but yet Simon Magus, of whom it is expressly stated that he believed, is not allowed to have been regenerated.

Now let us examine this interesting and important case; important, for we fear that it reflects the image of too many Christians of the present day. In the Acts, chapter viii., we read that "Philip went down to the city of Samaria, and preached Christ unto them;" and when the people saw the miracles which were performed, "they believed Philip preaching the things concerning the kingdom of God, and the name of Jesus Christ, and they were baptized, both men and women." According to the doctrine of the tract, the parties were regenerated, for they showed the

regenerate; Lydia's "heart was opened to attend to the things spoken of Paul," and so she was regenerate. Cornelius and his household received the miraculous powers of the Spirit, and no further proof of their regeneration is required. St. Paul was visited by Ananias that he might "receive his sight, and be filled with the Holy Ghost," and the attainment of the *first* blessing was proof of his regeneration.

fruits,—faith; and if this was the case with them, why, we ask, was not Simon regenerated? The Scriptures *pointedly and expressly declare the same things of him* which they do of the others, and even *in more emphatic words*. It is said of him, “then Simon himself believed also;” or, as the author, we presume, needs not to be told, “moreover, even Simon himself believed.” How then, we ask, (and we do it with a solemn feeling of reverence for the inspired word of God,) how shall any man of the present day, with his own unassisted powers, dare to deny the truth of the inspired penman? He has declared in the plainest terms (terms which successfully resist the strongest powers that may be employed to distort them), that “*even Simon also believed.*” There is not even the shadow of a peg on which to suspend the thought, that his faith at the time was less sincere than that of others who believed and were baptized: on the contrary, it is added of him, that he “*continued\** with Philip and

\* We do not attach too great importance to the word “continued,” but it implies more than English readers would commonly imagine; in a case precisely parallel, it is rendered

wondered, beholding the miracles and signs which were done." As the Scriptures declare the same, though in stronger terms, of Simon that they do of the others, if *they* were regenerated, then was *Simon*,—if *he* was not regenerated, then were *not they*. We hold, however, that they were equally so, and *that* in their baptism. The succeeding part of the history demands consideration, as offering matter in elucidation of our subject; and the examination will expose some errors into which the author, in common with other writers, has fallen. We read that the Apostles, when they "heard that Samaria had re-

"*continued stedfastly*;" "they continued stedfastly in the Apostles' doctrine and fellowship," Acts ii. 42. We subjoin all the passages in which the word is found in the New Testament: Mark iii. 9, "And he spake to his disciples that a ship should *wait on* him because of the multitude;" Acts i. 14, "And these all *continued* with one accord in prayer and supplication;" ii. 42, quoted above; ii. 46, "And they *continuing* daily in the temple;" vi. 4, "We will *give ourselves continually to prayer*;" x. 7, "Cornelius called two of his household servants, and a devout soldier of them which *waited on* him *continually*;" Rom. xii. 12, "*Continuing instant* in prayer;" xiii. 6, "For they are God's ministers *attending continually upon* this very thing;" Col. iv. 2, "*Continue in prayer*."

ceived the word of God, sent down from Jerusalem Peter and John, who prayed for them, that they might receive the Holy Ghost," that is, the miraculous powers of the Spirit, as the context shows; then, as the account proceeds, "they laid their hands on them, and they received the Holy Ghost; and when Simon saw that through laying on of the Apostles' hands the Holy Ghost was given, he offered them money, saying, *Give me also this power, that on whomsoever I lay hands, he may receive the Holy Ghost.* But Peter said unto him, *Thy money perish with thee, because thou hast thought that the gift of God may be purchased with money. Thou hast neither part nor lot in this matter; for thy heart is not right in the sight of God.*" Now what are we to understand by this last expression, "this matter"? It is too commonly, but most erroneously interpreted, of *the blessings of the Gospel*; it refers solely and exclusively to the matter just spoken of, namely, *the power of giving the Holy Ghost by the imposition of hands.* St. Peter, in other words, spurns the impious proposal: "There is not for thee any part or lot in this



miraculous gift of the Holy Ghost, for thy heart is not right in the sight of God." Indignant, however, as the Apostle justly was, he forgot not that he was addressing a brother in Christ; and therefore, with affectionate compassion, instructs him by what means he may be restored to God's favor: "*Repent, therefore, of this thy wickedness, and pray God if the thought of thine heart may be forgiven thee.*" Here is no direction that Simon should *pray for regeneration*, though, doubtless, had such a prayer been consistent, it would have been enjoined upon him. He is, however, directed to *repent*, and to *pray for forgiveness*; and not only so, but he is told that it is *St. Peter's belief, that he would in such case be forgiven*\*.

When St. Peter, on the day of Pentecost, told the Jews that they had with wicked hands crucified and slain Jesus of Nazareth,

\* *εἰ ἂν ἀφεθῇσεται*, if, in consequence of thy repentance and prayer, it will be forgiven thee, as I (Peter) am persuaded that it will. *Εἰ* with a future indicative implies the persuasion of the writer or speaker that the thing will happen, and hence it is frequently translated by "since."



a man approved of God among them, he urged them to "repent, and *be baptized for the remission of sins.*" When Simon made his impious proposal, the same Peter enjoins upon him to "repent, and *pray to God* for the same object, *the remission of his sins.*" This history, therefore, supplies us with the terms upon which Christians may expect that they will be restored to God's favour,—repentance and prayer.

But, forsooth, we are reminded of St. Peter's words to Simon, "Thou art in [into] the gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." We fear that the author of the tract has a very imperfect view of the matter, and we call his attention to the circumstance. Our translation is sufficiently clear for all practical purposes; but if an erroneous doctrine be attempted to be foisted upon the passage, it is necessary that we gather the precise meaning of St. Peter's expression. It is rather this, "for I perceive that thou hast come into the (or a) gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity." It is difficult to express, according to the common phraseology of our language, the full mean-

ing of St. Peter's words; it is, "for I perceive that thou art in, having come into\*." It is important to notice this feature in Simon's case; for if he is told by St. Peter that he had "*come into* a gall of bitterness and bond of iniquity," common sense will tell us that he *was not in it before*; and we need not to be informed that it was the impious proposal that he made to St. Peter that brought him into it. We have no reason to suppose that antecedently to this he was in it. This passage therefore affords a collateral proof in favour of baptismal regeneration; for it inclines us to infer, that at Simon's baptism he had been set at liberty from all bond of iniquity. It is not altogether unworthy of attention, that Simon "was pricked in his heart" by the Apostle's advice to him, for he supplicates Peter and John to pray for him, thinking that the prayers of these

\* Motion is always implied in *eis*, *into*, and therefore where there is no verb of motion expressed, one has to be supplied from the context. Acts xii. 4, "He put him in [into] prison," i.e. *he took him into and placed him in prison*; xiii. 29, "They took him down and laid him in [into] a sepulchre," i.e. *carried him into and laid him in*; xxxvii. 40, "made toward [into] shore," i.e. *kept the ship in the direction that it might drive to (into) the shore*.

faithful servants of God would avail more than his own: "Pray *ye* [emphatic] to the Lord for me, that [so that] none of these things which ye have spoken [may] come upon me."

The information which the Scriptures furnish respecting Hymenæus inclines to the same conclusion; for St. Paul says, 1 Tim. i. 19, 20, "*Holding* faith and a good conscience, which some *having put away*, concerning faith have made shipwreck, of whom is Hymenæus and Alexander." As, therefore, Hymenæus is said to have "put away from himself a good conscience," he must have been *in possession of it* before he put it away; and from this we naturally infer that he had been regenerated. The metaphorical expression, "have *made shipwreck* concerning the faith," implies the same, for they must have been before *sound in the faith*. The little that we read in the 2nd Epistle to Timothy respecting Phygellus and Hermogenes is of the same tendency; for their names are brought in by way of contrast, and Timothy is urged, in opposition to their example, to "*hold fast* the form of sound words."

The author has forgotten to mention an

associate of these who turned away from St. Paul in Asia. It is to be wished that the author had pronounced his sentence upon Demas; for not only are we told that he had forsaken St. Paul, but the reason is added, "Having loved this present world." Is Demas, we ask, to be placed among the "unregenerate"? If so, it seems strange that St. Paul, an inspired apostle, should make honorable mention of him in conjunction with Luke, and should have allowed him for a length of time\* to have been his fellow-labourer. Coloss. iv. 14, "Luke, the beloved physician, and Demas, salute thee;" and Philemon, 23, 24, "There salute thee, Epaphras, my fellow-prisoner in Christ Jesus; Marcus, Aristarchus, *Demas*†, Lucas, my fellow-labourers."

\* This must have been for several years; for honorable mention is made of him in St. Paul's Epistles to the Colossians and in that to Philemon, and his desertion of St. Paul is mentioned in his 2nd Epistle to Timothy, and it is implied that it had occurred not long before.

† Could the omission of Demas have arisen from St. Paul's words respecting Alexander having suggested themselves to Mr. Molyneux as not altogether inapplicable to the case of Demas and himself, *λίαν γὰρ ἀνθέστηκε τοῖς ἡμετέροις λόγοις*?



We come now to examine the passages adduced from the 1st Epistle of St. John, of which it is alleged that they "teach that certain effects invariably follow regeneration, which in multitudes, and far the greater proportion of cases, do not attend baptism." Now it will scarcely fail to strike the most inattentive reader of the Bible, that there is a remarkable similarity in the sentiment and style of expression between the 1st Epistle of St. John and the conversation which our Lord held with his disciples a short time before his crucifixion, detailed by the same Apostle in chapter xv. of his Gospel. A careful perusal of this chapter is strongly recommended, as offering the best commentary and clearest exposition of various expressions employed in the Epistles. Our Saviour, in reference to individuals, speaks of "*branches in him not bearing fruit*;" he tells his disciples that "*at that time these were clean*," but he urges them that they should "*abide in him*;" that in such case only could they "*bear fruit*." This he repeats again and again, and states that their "*abiding in his love*," *i. e.* the continuance of



his love towards them, depended on their "keeping his commandments." It must not fail to be remembered that our Lord is speaking of "*branches in him*;" for we presume it will be admitted that such as are brought into this close connexion with him are *regenerated*. Before they became engrafted their life was supported in the ordinary way, but afterwards the branches, partaking of a new nature, receive their nourishment and subsistence from the vine to which they have become united. The sap or juice which *it* diffuses through all its branches enables *them* to bear fruit. Our Saviour's words, therefore, being spoken of the branches, are utterly unintelligible, unless they be interpreted as implying that regenerate persons may fall,—may cease to preserve that close connexion with him which is necessarily understood by the expression, "*branches in him*\*;" and, moreover, that

\* It may be advisable to state, that though our Lord's words were addressed immediately to his Apostles, he designed them to apply to all his disciples in all ages of the world; for at the conclusion of his discourse he generalized them by his prayer, "Neither pray I for these alone, but for them also which shall believe on me through their word

this connexion is preserved through their loving Christ and keeping his commandments.

Now it is not likely that the beloved disciple, who has detailed these observations of our Lord, would in his own teaching set himself up in opposition to his Master. On the contrary, we are only drawing a legitimate inference when we say, that St. John's Epistle is to be interpreted in accordance with the principles laid down in chapter xv. of his Gospel: nay, that if the phraseology of the Epistle, written, as that Epistle was, to combat certain errors, be in any of its expressions ambiguous, its explanation and right meaning must be gathered from our Saviour's words. It is the more reasonable on this account, that St. John's Epistle commences with a manifest allusion to this conversation of our Lord's. In chapter i. verse 4, St. John writes, "These things write we unto you, that your joy may be full," as our blessed Lord had said, "These things have I spoken unto you that your joy

that they all may be one, as thou, Father, art in me and I in thee, that they also may be one in us, that the world may believe that thou hast sent me."

might be full\*,” the things *spoken by our Lord and written by St. John being the same*, the necessity that the disciples should *abide in Christ and keep his commandments*. This feature manifestly runs through the Epistle, the object of which is expressly declared to be, that those who were in Christ should not sin: “My little children, these things write I unto you, that ye sin not†,” in words drawn from the Gospel, that they should “keep Christ’s commandments and abide in his love.” We apply, therefore, to the Gospel of St. John as a key to the right understanding of those passages in the Epistle where “certain effects are said to attend those who are born of God.” Were we to understand these passages as stating that certain effects *invariably* attend *all* persons born of God, it would be in manifest contradiction of the Apostle himself, who states it to be the object of his epistle that *those who had been born of God might not fall into sin*; and also of our Saviour, whose exhortations to his disciples, that they *should abide in him*, would be useless and even absurd, if those

\* John xv. 11.

† 1 St. John ii. 1.

*once born of God could not do otherwise than abide in him.*

The instruction which we are rather to derive from the Epistle is this—that we should make it our constant endeavour to keep Christ's commandments, and especially that we should love one another in order that we may abide in him. Understanding the Epistle as speaking in harmony with the declarations of our Lord himself, and with all the varied exhortations to holiness which stand prominently forward in the Catholic Epistles, there is nothing which offers any solid ground to allege the wicked lives of Christians as an argument that they were *not* regenerated in their baptism. The passages adduced receive their interpretation from the preceding context, 1 John v. 4, "Whatsoever is born [has been born] of God overcometh the world." St. John had just been urging upon his brethren to whom he wrote that they should "love one another\*." This was their duty (their debt), and it is by this alone that the children can know that "God remaineth or abideth in them"—it is by this *love of the*

\* 1 John iv. 12.



*brethren* that the love of God is *perfected*, made complete. As he says in verse 17, "*Herein* is our love [love with or among us] made perfect\*,—*that* as he is, so are we in this world." Without this essential ingredient (we may say) in perfect love, there is in reality no such thing as love of God. In chapter v. St. John commences by saying, that "every one who believes that Jesus is

\* We have omitted the clause which expresses the end of this love being made perfect, "that we may have boldness in the day of judgement"; and our reason has been that we may more readily perceive wherein it is that our love is *made perfect*. In verses 9 and 10, ὅτι is, under precisely similar circumstances, rendered "that," and the clause corresponds with the words "hereby," "herein". In verse 13, the word is translated "because," which we are to understand in the same way, and to consider the clause as an explanation of "hereby" at the beginning of the verse. This is not conjecture, but is proved by the last verse of the preceding chapter, where "the Spirit being given," is the evidence upon which we know that "God abideth in us." "And hereby we know that he abideth in us, *by the Spirit which he hath given us.*" This same sentiment is expressed in chapter iv. 13. "*Hereby* we know that we dwell in him and he in us, *because he hath given us of his Spirit.*" In verse 17, "because" is to be understood in the same way; *our* resembling Christ in this world, *i. e.* in the love which he showed to the brethren, is, *that* wherein our love is *made perfect*.



the Christ is born \* of God," and how does he bring this to bear upon his subject? This new relation in which a Christian is placed in regard to his God lays him under an obligation to love his brethren. "Every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him." The beloved Apostle proceeds to argue that this love implies a keeping of his commandments, and "his commandments," he adds, "are not grievous." In proof of this he introduces the verse before us. "For whatsoever is born of God overcometh the world," which is the same as he expresses in the fourth verse of the previous chapter, "Greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world;" *i.e.* every one who is born of God is endued with a power which is superior to that of the world. This power may be suffered to lie dormant, and in such case the world will not be overcome. It appears to escape the observation of those who allege that St. John represents certain effects as invariably attending rege-

\* This follows immediately upon belief in Christ, according to our Saviour's declaration, "He that believeth and is baptised shall be saved." The eunuch lost no time before he was baptized; in like manner Cornelius and his household and so others.

neration, that in the two chapters where he speaks of the ability with which the sons of God are endued, he says, in one case, "*ye have overcome*," in the other, "*overcometh*" not *hath overcome*, his intention being to signify,—in the former case, that those, born of God, had successfully withstood the false prophets who denied that Christ was come in the flesh,—in the latter, that whatsoever\* has been born of God is of power to overcome the world.

In regard to the second passage quoted, 1 John, iii. 9, "Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him; and he cannot sin, because he is born of God." The context appears to us to explain sufficiently that St. John is speaking as our Saviour does, *not* of every one who is born of God, but of *every one* who (having been born of God) *abideth in that state*. The reason given for certain parties not sinning, is stated, first, that God's seed abideth in

\* It is a question among commentators whether "*whatsoever*" is to be understood as "*whosoever*;" we are inclined to think that St. John used the neuter form, intending it to be understood generally, and to imply the same as he had done in chapter iv. 14; we might give the meaning, "God is greater than the world."

them; and, secondly, that they have been born of God. Now let us examine the previous part of the chapter, where we shall find a remarkable similarity and parallelism running through several corresponding verses. This running comparison forms a clear commentary, and fully explains the sense in which St. John intended himself to be understood. He seems to argue that the Christian who abides in Christ studies to avoid all sin, whether transgressions of law, or sin that originally proceeded from the devil. We will place the corresponding verses beside one another.

Verse 3. Everyone who has this hope in him purifieth himself even as he is pure.

4. Whosoever committeth sin transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

5. And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins; and in him is no sin.

6. *Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not*: whosoever sinneth hath not seen him, neither known him.

Verse 7. He that doeth righteousness is righteous even as he is righteous.

8. He that committeth sin is of the devil, for the devil sinneth from the beginning.

For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

9. *Whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth (abideth) in him*, and he cannot sin, because he is born of God.

We think it impossible for any person to read these verses, thus placed in juxtaposition, without at once perceiving that the ninth verse is explained by the sixth ; and therefore, that where St. John says, "*Who-soever is born of God* doth not commit sin, for his seed remaineth in him," he is to be understood in the sense of the sixth verse, "*Whosoever abideth in him* sinneth not." This interpretation reconciles the Epistle with the Gospel,—the instruction given by the beloved disciple with that given by our Lord himself.

One other passage is quoted by the author of the tract in support of his position, namely, Rom. viii. 14: "As many as are led by the Spirit of God, they are the sons of God." We beg, however, to inform him that St. Paul intends something very different from what the author imagines. The context shows that in verse 12 the Apostle draws a conclusion from his previous reasoning, namely, that "we are debtors, to live *not* to the flesh" *but to the Spirit* ; and he proceeds to say, as he had shown before, that a living after the flesh would lead to *death*, but "if



ye through the Spirit do mortify the deeds of the body *ye shall live.*" And how does the Apostle prove this assertion\*? They who "through the Spirit mortify the deeds of the body,"—in other words, "they who are being led by the Spirit of God,—they are the sons of God" (that is, none but the sons of God are led by the Spirit); "for ye have not received the spirit of bondage again to fear, but ye have received the spirit of adoption, whereby we cry Abba, Father;—and if children, then heirs, heirs of God, joint heirs with Christ; if so be that we suffer with him, that we may be glorified together." The real intent of the passage, therefore, is to urge, and that too upon the sons of God, *a mortifying the deeds of the body*; for if they possess this evidence, they may feel assured that, being sons, and therefore joint-heirs with Christ, they *will be glorified with him.*

If the interpretation which, in the pre-

\* He does it by several steps, which we will thus describe. *They who are led by the Spirit of God are sons of God; they who are sons of God are heirs of God, joint-heirs with Christ; and these having suffered with him, will also be glorified together.*



ceding pages, we have put upon the Word of God be correct, we have removed every ground upon which the fanciful doctrine of final perseverance, and its twin brother, indefectibility of grace, can stand. We mean not to make further allusion to them, as we trust we have sufficiently shown that baptismal regeneration, according to the interpretation of the Church of England, is the doctrine of the Word of God; and if so, final perseverance and indefectibility of grace must be the vain conceits of man.

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BEFORE we conclude our treatise, it may be advisable that we should give a brief summary of the evidence upon which the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, as set forth by the Church of England, is supported by the Word of God. Her doctrine is this, that all men are born in sin, or are sinful, and this sinfulness of nature remains not an inactive principle, but in every man breaks out into the commission of actual sin; that Christ,

the Son of God, having by his death made an atonement for the sins of the whole world, ordained a sacrament by which the benefits of his death might, for the first time, be brought home to individuals; that these benefits, thereby conveyed, consist of *remission of sins*, and *the gift of the Holy Ghost*; by which last blessing the baptized party becomes *a child of God*, and is thereby *entitled to an inheritance in the future and eternal kingdom of heaven*; that this sonship binds the party by the most solemn and sacred ties to a constant compliance with all the holy requirements of the Gospel; and that the attainment of eternal life will depend upon the Christian conforming himself thereto; and, moreover, that one of the blessings of this regeneration is, that the Holy Ghost takes up his abode in the baptized party, and is there ever and on all occasions, when sincerely and faithfully applied to, ready to exert his influence, and to supply powers for the sanctification of the believer.

We would now give a summary of the evidence upon which the Church of England rests this doctrine, which has been handed

down to her as the unanimous voice of Christian antiquity.

Our Saviour's life was in all respects (sin only excepted) the counterpart of our own. Whatever he did was *necessary*\*, not on his own account, but for our sakes. He was baptized, and while he was coming up out of the water the Holy Ghost visibly descended † upon him. This descent could not have been necessary on his own account, as from conception ‡ he was filled with the Spirit; it was therefore for man's sake: but as our Lord's miracles sufficiently attested § his divine power, this visible descent of the Spirit at his baptism is considered as a prophetic token and surety that the Holy Ghost is invisibly communicated in Christian baptism. One less || than the least in the kingdom of heaven was the minister employed for Christ's baptism, yet the Holy Ghost descended ¶ upon the baptized Jesus. Moreover, while this visible descent was taking place, the voice\*\*

\* Hebrews ii. 17. Matth. iii. 15. † Matth. iii. 16.

‡ Luke i. 35.

§ John v. 36, x. 38, xiv. 11, xv. 24. Acts ii. 22.

|| Matth. xi. 11. ¶ Matth. iii. 16. \*\* Matth. iii. 17.

of the Father from heaven pronounces the baptized Jesus to be the beloved *Son*, in whom the Father was well pleased. The Church therefore infers, that, as this must have been designed for man's benefit, it was intended to signify that in the baptism which Christ would establish the parties would become the adopted sons of God. The Scriptures again teach that our Lord gave power\* or authority to such as received him to *become* the sons of God,—who would thereby be born of God; that he himself declared more definitely that a new birth was necessary for every person, that he might enter into the kingdom of heaven; that he designated this new birth, a birth† of *water* and the *Spirit*; that this truth was announced with the solemn asseveration of Divinity itself, twice repeated, *Verily, verily, I say unto thee*.

The Scriptures, beyond all controversy, relate that our Lord instituted, in commemoration of his death, a sacrament‡ which betokens the necessity of having spiritual life *sustained*, the outward and visible sign of the

\* John i. 12.

† John iii. 5.

‡ Matth. xxvi. 26. John vi. 53, 54.



sacrament being elements by which *natural life* is supported; and the Church concludes that this seemed to refer to a spiritual life previously communicated: a sacrament having been ordained for the *sustaining* spiritual life, she reasonably supposes that there would be some *visible token ordained for the first communication of this life*. She finds another sacrament ordained by Christ, the visible sign\* of which betokens that *cleansing by which alone* the soul could be said to be *spiritually alive*; and it was with this same element that our Lord had associated *the Spirit* as necessary in what he denominated a birth (a beginning of life) for a man to enter into his kingdom; and it is the same element from which he was ascending at his baptism when the Holy Ghost lighted upon him, and he was pronounced from heaven the Son of God. This sacrament is BAPTISM; and to this the Scriptures inform us that our Saviour attached *salvation*† and, according to another evangelist‡, *remission of sins*. In accordance with our Lord's directions, the apostles suspended the execution of their

\* Matth. xxviii. 19. † Mark xvi. 16. ‡ Luke xxiv. 47.



commission\* to preach the Gospel and to *enjoin baptism*, until the scheme for human salvation was fully developed by the descent of the Holy Ghost. Immediately, however, upon this event occurring, not a day is suffered to intervene, but baptism† is urged and administered *for the remission of sins and for the reception of the Holy Ghost*. All the cases of baptism recorded in the Scriptures directly assert, or indirectly imply, that the baptized parties had their *sins remitted in baptism, and had the Holy Ghost communicated to them*. Baptized parties are spoken of in such terms as represent a *merciful gift of God communicated to them, even the remission of sins*; for they are addressed as *holy*§, *sanctified*||, *washed*¶, *saints*\*\*.

The word of God also employs a variety of figurative expressions†† to baptized parties, which can only be explained consistently with the rest of Scripture by the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, namely, that *sins are remitted in baptism, and that the Holy Ghost takes up his*

\* Luke xxiv. 49. † Acts ii. 38. § Ephes. i. 4.

|| 1 Cor. i. 2.

¶ 1 Cor. vi. 11.

\*\* Rom. i. 7, v. 1, 2, viii. 1.

†† Rom. vi. 3.; Gal. iii. 27; 1 Cor. iii. 16, vi. 19.

*abode in the baptized party.* Lastly, the Scriptures declare that baptism had been typified in former ages by various events which had occurred, in each of which the prominent feature is a SALVATION\*. In addition to, and in confirmation of this weight of Scripture evidence for the doctrine of baptismal regeneration, it must not fail to be mentioned, that the unanimous voice of the Church to the present day, and of all ecclesiastical writers till Calvin lived, interprets Scripture as teaching that *regeneration* takes place *only in baptism*.

We had hoped to have concluded ere this, but we feel impelled to point out to our readers, and to impress upon their most serious and solemn consideration, that this gracious, merciful gift of God, *regeneration*, places a man in an *awfully responsible condition*. He has received *much*, and accordingly *much* will be required of him. He has a talent committed to him, even the unspeakable gift of the Holy Ghost. This talent, the Scripture informs us, and the Church teaches us, is *to be improved*. It may be suffered to lie

\* 1 Cor. x. 2; 1 Peter iii. 21.

dormant in us, it may be laid up in a napkin, to be received again by our Lord when he shall take account of his servants ; but such was not the condition of the gift. It was stipulated that we employ the talent; and they who form a right estimate of its value will avail themselves of the power that it affords. With its aid they will work effectually in their Master's service, cherishing the hope of a glorious inheritance with Christ ; they will abide in him, and purify themselves even as they know he is pure.

We will conclude our observations by comparing the Church's doctrine of baptismal-regeneration with the representation given by St. Paul. This representation is the more important, because it was given with the express object to warn Christians of the danger there was lest they might finally fall. *He* laboured in his vocation, that he might be found faithful in the end ; for *his* sanctification he kept under his body, and brought it into subjection ; for by this alone could he entertain the hope that he should not himself be a castaway. To enforce his own example as a pattern for the Corinthians, he

introduces the circumstances of the Jews passing through the Red Sea, and afterwards journeying through the wilderness; declaring that these events represent the condition of Christians, the passing through the Red Sea being a type of Christian baptism. We have already seen that the preservation of Noah and his family in the ark was, according to St. Peter, typical of salvation by baptism; but, though this representation was perfect in itself, it took no notice of the condition of Christians after baptism. The object which St. Paul had in view, namely, to warn Christians against a dangerous reliance on their privileges, obliged him to refer to this condition, and therefore the instruction which the comparison will afford may be most beneficial to us. We will briefly consider the case of the Jews, in order that we may thereby discover how far the doctrine of baptismal regeneration is supported by the comparison.

The passage through the Red Sea was a positive deliverance from a state of bondage, —an actual salvation from enemies; this deliverance and this salvation being achieved

solely by the power of Heaven, though Moses was allowed to be the agent for its accomplishment. The Egyptian enemies were for ever destroyed in the sea, as the Jews rose from its waters. The Jews were therefore actually saved from every enemy behind them, and were thereby placed in a condition of freedom perfectly new to them. They had been promised the possession of the land of Canaan; but their baptism in the Red Sea, however great a salvation in itself, did not give them possession of that promised land. Had they *not* passed through the sea, it would have been impossible for them to have gained the land of Canaan. After their passage they had still to travel through the wilderness, which however afforded no means of sustenance and support. Of vain ornaments they had brought abundance with them from their land of slavery; but they lacked the staff of life. Without this, their salvation by the sea would have been useless to them: their new life had to be sustained by food miraculously supplied to them,—water struck for them from a rock (which rock, we are told, was in the antitype Christ), and manna continually supplied ac-



cording to their daily wants. These blessings were given to all the Jews. "*All*\* our fathers were under the cloud, and *all* passed through the sea; and were *all* baptized unto Moses in the cloud and in the sea; and did *all* eat the same spiritual meat; and did *all* drink the same spiritual drink."

Yet, with the far greater part of them, God was not well pleased; and, in consequence, they were overthrown in the wilderness; they never reached the promised land. The goodness of God in having saved them from their enemies, in having supplied them with the means of sustenance during their sojourn in the wilderness, became unavailing to them, because they disobeyed God's commandments. They came not into possession of the promised land, because, during their passage through the wilderness, they *lusted*,—they were *idolatrous*,—they *committed fornication*,—they *tempted God*,—they *murmured*.

Now all these events, St. Paul says, are types of Christians; let us, then, endeavour to trace the parallelism in the antitype. In Christian baptism men are saved from all

\* 1 Cor. x. 1.

their spiritual enemies behind them, their sins are put away from them, and thus Christians are by baptism placed in a condition of freedom from spiritual bondage,—of safety from every thing behind them, with a prospect of the heavenly Canaan before them. Their baptism does not give them *possession* of this promised land, though nothing but their disobedience can deprive them of it. They have, however, to pass through the wilderness of life; and so barren is it, that Christians possess in themselves no means of providing support for that spiritual life which was first communicated in baptism. They need the bread of life, and this, their need, is richly supplied from heaven. They are furnished with the means of strengthening and refreshing their souls,—with the body and blood of Christ: “Except ye eat the flesh of the Son of Man, and drink his blood, ye have no life in you\*.” But, as with the Jews, so with many Christians, God is not well pleased, and unless they will suffer themselves to be instructed and guided in heart by what the Apostle has expressly declared was written

\* John vi. 53.

for their admonition, they will be overthrown by God in the wilderness, far away from that land of eternal promise to which God's righteous servants will undoubtedly attain. Would they desire that their baptismal privileges should avail them to their final salvation, they must flee those vices which provoked God's anger against the Jews in the wilderness,—they must be ever vigilant in their walking, remembering the Apostle's admonition, "Wherefore let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

We have thus endeavoured to compare the doctrine of BAPTISMAL REGENERATION with the Word of God and the Standards of the Church of England; and we think we may without presumption entertain a confident hope, that our remarks are sufficient to refute the fallacies, to expose the inconsistencies, and to correct the mis-statements which have been lately put forth upon this subject. "It is incumbent on those who desire to be faithful ministers and members of the Church of England, to do what they can to vindicate her purity, and rescue her prin-

ciples from such a charge" as has been so audaciously put forth.

We will only add our hope, that Christians will learn ever gratefully to acknowledge the gracious gift of God in having regenerated them in their baptism, and that they will pray that, being regenerated, they may daily be renewed by God's Holy Spirit, endeavouring in their lives to "be followers of St. Paul, even as he also was of Christ."

THE END.













